AUSTRALIAN & BRITISH

SOCCER

VOL. 22 No. 1018 – TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2001 ● REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIAN POST ● PUBLICATIONS No. NBQ5726 WEEKLY $3.30 GST INCLUSIVE

Glory Shocks Power

Bobby Despotovski (Number 10) is embraced by Kasey Wehrman after scoring the winner last Friday against Parramatta Power at Parramatta Stadium. The 2-3 win elevated Perth into second position on the ladder.

Thompson Stays at Marconi

By John Economos

Archie Thompson, Marconi's newly acquired mobile goalscorer, early last week changed his plans and elected to remain in Australia for the time being instead of flying out for a 10 day trial with a Belgian Club side, seeking fame and fortune.

And what a huge stroke of luck that proved for Marconi last Sunday in Melbourne.

The 22 year old exciting marksman, was scheduled to fly out to Belgium last week for pre-arranged trials with leading club side, Anderlecht. However after sustaining an injury to his right ankle in his debut match for Marconi against Newcastle United, Thompson wisely chose to advise his managers, 'Pro Active', that it would be intelligent for him to delay his European crusade till he made a complete recovery from his injury.

"I didn't think it was correct to go over there, (Belgium), when I wasn't fully fit," stated Thompson.

Inserted in his contract, Marconi has agreed to a clause, giving Thompson an automatic release to any overseas club, whenever a firm contract is extended to him. Marconi has a fixed sum included in Thompson's contract as compensation, but that sum increases substantially should the striker remain till the end of the current NSL season.

The former Carlton goal-ace that was snapped up by Marconi two weeks ago, has now scored nine goals in the NSL this season.

Last Sunday in Marconi's away game to the Melbourne Knights, Thompson not only played, but scored Marconi's first two second half goals that laid the solid foundations for his team's 1-4 victory over the tough Victorians.

Archie Thompson: Remains with Marconi—for the time being.

Olympic's 'No' To Leeds

By John Economos

Nick Politis, Sydney Olympic's chairman, had an emphatic 'No', ready in answer to say to Leeds United's chairman, Peter Ridsdale, had the Englishman tabled an offer, or even a desire, for his Club to takeover Olympic.

Mr Risedale arrived in Australia last week with an expressed desire to formulate some form of an alliance with an Australian club, with the specific aim to enable the England giants to acquire first pick of upcoming Australian talent.

Nick Politis: Sydney Olympic's Chief.

Mr Risdale stated: "If we set up a strategic alliance, it would be so that we get the best talent out of Australia. It would be for us to get the best Youth from Australia to come to Leeds United," ended Risdale.

The Leeds' boss had a private meeting with Politis last week.

It was understood that Politis made it clear to Ridsdale that Olympic was 'not for sale at any price'.

"We're not interested in any form of sale," Politis is reported to have insinuated to the man from Yorkshire at the meeting.

"We had no problem talking to Leeds. As far as we, (Olympic), are concerned, the name and colours of Sydney Olympic will never change," Politis emphasised.

"Our meeting was only to see what Leeds really wanted from us," ended Politis, one of the four 'White Knights' that hold a majority shareholding of Sydney Olympic.

From brief observations, it first appeared that Leeds was not actually seeking a direct ownership, or part-takeover, of any Australian NSL club.

On the surface it appeared that the Leeds Club was initially just solely interested in marketing itself here in Australia by forming an affiliation with a club.

Peter Ridsdale: Leeds United Chairman.

But as late as yesterday, ABSW was able to ascertain from another source, that Leeds United, is in fact right now, seriously looking to buy a 51 % controlling interest of an NSL club.

With no less than six Australian players on Leeds' payroll, the England Premier League Club has strong visions of also expanding the Leeds' brand here in Australia.

The great Manchester United is already making inroads to break into the huge and potentially lucrative market for merchandising in China.

Whilst Mr Risdale is in Australia, it's understood that he will be having some dialogue with other clubs in the NSL.

These clubs include the Parramatta Power, the Melbourne Knights, plus new applicant wishing to gain admittance into next season's reduced National League, the Western Lightening.

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AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH
SOCCER
WEEKLY

Issue No. 1018
"Published every Tuesday by
F.L. Press
5-13 Garners Ave.,
Marrickville NSW 2204

TELEPHONE
(editorial and general enquiries)
Tel: (02) 9562 0559
or
Tel: (02) 9562 0565

(advertising)
John Economos
Tel: (02) 9744 6984 OR
Tel: (02) 9562 0559

E-MAIL
(editorial, advertising and general enquiries)
soccerweekly@hotmail.com
ABSW's-new E-mail:
soccer@foreignlanguage.com.au

FACSIMILE
(editorial, advertising and general enquiries)
(02) 9550 9332 or (02) 9564 1224

MAILING ADDRESS
P.O. Box 155 Marrickville NSW 1475

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Sylvia Marinos
Phone: (02) 9562 0575
Australia: $143 (GST incl.)
Overseas: $198 (GST incl.)

STAND-IN EDITOR
Daniel Giorelando

ASSISTANT EDITOR:
Mark Fowler

CHIEF WRITER
John Economos

STAFF WRITER
Daniel Giorelando

LAYOUT/TYPESETTING
Mary Quartly, Alamita Vea

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Recommended and maximum price.
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Deadline for contributions, articles and advertising is 3 days PRIOR to issue date.

Matthew Rosier: Aussie Star at The Dell

By Mark Stavroulakis

Australia has recently become the capital of exporting players to overseas clubs, and it must be every young players dream to one day play for a prestigious European club.

At the age of 17, Sydney born Matthew Rosier is one lad living it up in the fast lane.

A former graduate of the NSW ITC, Rosier believes that it was the training and coaching at the Institute that helped him immensely overseas. "I spent two solid seasons at the ITC where I enjoyed the training and coaching.

Professionalism is the key at the ITC, and with great facilities as well, it was a place I was more than happy to be a part of. Kelly Cross was one man that was quality to say the least. He's what you look for in a coach as he had the appropriate discipline and qualifications to develop youth players," said Rosier.

Representing the state is a huge honor in the early stages of any young soccer players' career and Matthew was fortunate enough to do this with NSW.

"I made the U15 and U16 NSW State teams which was a huge honor for myself.

We took out the U15 title in Adelaide beating South Australia two-one, but lost the final in Canberra to Victoria three-one. Nonetheless it was an awesome experience playing against the best players across Australia," said Rosier.

The former Westfield Sports High student was highly rewarded through his final appearance for NSW as it was in Canberra scouts from Premier League club Southampton saw his potential. "After the Nationals were over, I received a phone call from a Southampton scout who witnessed me play and asked me to trial for 3 weeks in November '99. I did that and played three games for the U17 squad there and impressed, as they asked me to come back in late February the following year to sign a scholarship. It was a dream of mine to play overseas and I finally got the chance to do just that," said the excited star.

Matthew Rosier: Enjoying life at Southampton

The deal at Southampton was to start playing for the U17, then work up the ranks to the U19's, then reserves and hopefully first grade. Matthew's scholarship finishes in 2002, so he has until then to impress the people at The Dell.

Asked about how it's been so far at the Saints, Rosier's reply was ecstatic to say the least. "I've really enjoyed my stay at Southampton so far as the club has been very good to me and my family. I've played many games and have realized that the English Youth League is much stronger and tougher than what I was used. The youth league is split up in different zones, we are in the Southern group and play against Arsenal, Chelsea, Tottenham and West Ham. There's also an F.A Cup tournament which we are doing quite well in and have reached the next stages of the Cup and as soon as I return home, on the 16th of January, we play Leeds United at Elland Road against some of my old Australian mates (Jamie McMaster, Bradley Groves and Shane Sheriff)," said the young gun.

Rosier isn't the only Australian player currently at The Dell, Australian U2O Representative Scotty McDonald, and Western Australian products Adrian Caezeris and Darren Broxton are also apart of the Saints "Aussie" contingent.

Southampton has a population of 300,000 people, and Matthew has adapted to the place quite well. "It's a nice quaint town and I've really adapted to the place. All the scholarship players stay at the lodge (an old hotel), where an old couple looks us after us. It's about a two-minute walk from The Dell, and we also have a chef that comes everyday to cook for us. The place has a leisure room where we play pool and also have Internet facilities. The training facilities are amazing, we have four training fields, an astro-turf field and indoor center. We also have a gym and weights room, so professionalism is at it's best," Rosier said.

Rosier is being trimmed to be one of the stars of the future, and after gaining captaincy for the U19's squad against Watford in a league game, anything is possible. "It was a huge honor being captain for a match at the club, as you hold all the responsibilities of the side in your hands," he said.

This youngster's ambition is to stay as long as possible in England and hopefully crack a reserve grade spot soon. Then after that, impressing first grade coach Glen Hoddle would be the next thing to gain a professional contract. Also, representing his country, Australia in the 2003 World Cup in the U20's would be another thing on his mind.

Currently on a Christmas break, Rosier returns to chilly England on the 11th of January ready to tackle the big boys of the Premier League.

Asked about which player at Southampton is the best, Rosier's reply was, "Le Tissier is God at The Dell. He's had his injury problems but I've never seen a player strike a ball as good as him, the fans at The Dell call him Le God, and I could understand why", said the Southampton star.

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

SOUTHERN DIVISION

LEADING SCORERS

Name	Team	Goals
Steve Manceski	South Melbourne	15
Nick Waite	Peninsula Blues	12
Denis Mustac	Eastern Pride	10
Viktor Memeti	South Dandenong	9
Daniel Debevc	Carlton	8

ROUND 13 MATCHES

WEDNESDAY 20 JANUARY 2001

Eastern Pride v Melbourne Knights Academy,
(Mobil Park, 4 pm)
Green Gully v South Melbourne,
(Green Gully Reserve, 5 pm)
South Melbourne Eagles Academy v Peninsula Blues
(Keilor Park Reserve, 5 pm)

SUNDAY 21 JANUARY 2001

Fawkner Blues v Preston Lions,
(C. B. Smith Reserve, 4 pm)
South Dandenong v Melbourne Knights,
(George Andrews Reserve, 4 pm)

Bye v VIS
Bye v Albury-Wodonga
Bye v Bulleen Zebras

WEDNESDAY 24 JANUARY 2001

Fawkner Blues v Peninsula Blues
(The Grange Reserve, TBA)

By Roy Hay

GREEN GULLY 0 MELBOURNE KNIGHTS ACADEMY 5

Last Wednesday Melbourne Knights Academy downed Green Gully by 5-0 at Green Gully Reserve.

Sweeper Ante Cirjak took a free kick after 18 minutes which swung and dipped over the keeper for the opening goal. Sertan Doganay made it two in 36 minutes. The other three goals came in the second half from Jim Alamaris, Dragi Nastevski and Sam Kalakias.

PENINSULA BLUES 4 ALBURY WODONGA 1

Peninsula Blues beat Albury Wodonga by 4-1 in a match switched to last Saturday night.

Nick Waite's 12th of the season put the Blues in front after 15 minutes and Luke Vittari made it two on the half-hour. Just before the break Kevin Mitchell scored with a header following a corner kick. Albury Wodonga created most of the chances in the second half, despite having a player sent off.

David Afonso scored for the Warriors. The Blues fourth goal came with five minutes to play from fifteen year old substitute John Jovan.

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS FAWKNER BLUES (MATCH POSTPONED)

SOUTH DANDENONG MELBOURNE KNIGHTS ACADEMY (MATCH POSTPONED)

South Melbourne and the VIS played last night (Monday) after ABSW went to print, while there will be two games last Wednesday between Bulleen Zebras and South Melbourne Eagles Academy and the VIS will be back in action again at home to Eastern Pride.

Soccer Australia has confirmed that the list of goalscorers will include all goals scored this season, including those against Carlton/Whittlesea Stallions.

ROUND 11 TABLES

WEDNESDAY 10 JANUARY 2001

Green Gully 0 Melbourne Knights Academy 5 (Sertan Doganay, Jim Alamaris, Dragi Nastevski, Sam Kalakias, Ante Cirjak)

ROUND 12

SATURDAY 13 JANUARY 2001

Peninsula Blues 4 (Mick Waite, Luke Vittari, Kevin Mitchell, John Jovan) **Albury-Wodonga 1** (David Afonso)

SUNDAY 14 JANUARY 2001

Melbourne Knights v Fawkner Blues
(Match postponed)
Sth Dandenong Melbourne Knights Academy
(Match postponed)

ROUND 13

WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY 2001

Bulleen Zebras South Melbourne Eagles Academy (Veneto Club, 7 pm)
VIS Eastern Pride
(Grange Reserve, 6 pm)
Green Gully v Bye
Preston Lions v Bye
Eastern Pride v Bye

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Eastern Pride	10	8	0	2	37	10	24
Melbourne Knights	10	8	0	2	30	12	24
VIS	11	7	1	3	29	16	22
South Melbourne Institute	9	7	0	2	56	16	21
Peninsula Blues	10	7	0	3	32	13	21
Melbourne Knights Academy	10	6	0	4	18	18	18
South Melbourne Eagles Ac	9	5	0	4	20	18	15
South Dandenong	9	4	2	3	15	14	14
Albury Wodonga	12	3	2	7	13	30	11
Green Gully Cavaliers	11	2	3	6	12	24	9
Bulleen Zebras	11	2	2	7	14	29	8
Fawkner Blues	10	1	2	7	12	33	5
Preston Lions	10	0	0	10	7	62	0

NORTHERN DIVISION

FRIDAY 12 JANUARY 2001

Parramatta Power 7 *(Thompson 10', 73', Brown 18', 90', own goal 32', Holman 34', Biggins 53')* **ACT Academy 1** *(Cattanach 80')*

New. Utd Youth 4 *(Trpcevski 16', Juchniewicz 37', Hughes 70', K. O'Brien 71')* **Syd Oly Youth 2** *(Zorbas 21', Skanavis 72')*

SATURDAY 13 JANUARY 2001

Canberra Cosmos 1 *(Ivanic 48')* **AIS 2** *(T. Smith 71', Valeri 83')*

Sydney United 4 *(Picken 3', 78', Orlovic 30', Maric 49')* **New. Utd Colts 2** *(Libbesson 39', Christodoulides 64')*

SUNDAY 14 JANUARY 2001

Marconi 1 *(Tavouktsis 80')* **NSWIS 4** *(Cop 24', Cardozo 33', 54', Stavroulakis, 68')*

Syd Oly Academy *(Haliti 1', Mengi 19')* **Marconi 7** *(Gulessarian 39', 84', 89', Mondello 54', Hartshorn 72', Last 74', Bozinovski 81')*

Bye - QAS

POSTPONED MATCH - TBA
Wollongong Wolves v Northern Spirit

	P	W	D	B	L	F	A	Pts
A.I.S.	13	11	1	1	1	33	11	34
Marconi Stallions	12	9	2	1	1	28	7	29
Parramatta Power	13	8	1	0	4	42	20	25
Northern Spirit	11	7	1	1	3	23	11	22
Wollongong Wolves	11	6	3	1	2	26	11	21
Sydney United	13	6	1	1	6	25	25	20
Newcastle United	12	6	1	1	5	19	13	18
Marconi S. Colts	13	6	0	1	7	28	23	18
Sydney Olympic	12	5	2	1	5	26	26	17
N.S.W.I.S.	13	5	2	1	6	15	23	17
Canberra Cosmos	13	4	3	1	6	26	25	15
Q.A.S.	12	4	1	1	7	20	32	13
Sydney O. Academy	12	1	3	1	8	13	27	6
ACT Academy	12	1	1	1	10	6	48	4
Newcastle Utd Colts	10	1	0	1	9	6	33	3

F.C. PELISTER

AUSTRALIAN TOUR

F.C. Pelister, who is one of the most popular and most entertaining teams in the Macedonian League, is currently touring Australia for the very first time.

The tour kicks off on 4th January, through till 25th January 2001.

Whilst on tour, F.C.Pelister has been scheduled to play exhibition matches against some leading teams from the NSL, and will include games against the Marconi Stallions, Sydney Olympic as well as the Melbourne Knights.

The touring Club boasts some of its achievements that include:

Branko Culina

F.C. Pelister Squad

3rd in the UEFA CUP 2000

Finalist in the MACEDONIAN CUP 1997

Quarter Finalist in the YUGOSLAV Cup 1984

WINNER of the BALKAN CUP 1983

Whilst in Australia, F.C. Pelister will play additional friendly matches have also been arranged to be played against 'the Macedonian All Stars' in Sydney, Melbourne and Wollongong.

During its 55 year history, F.C. Pelister has produced world-class players such as:

Kanatlarovski D – Vardar Skopje, Red Star Belgrade, Deportivo la Coruna Spain.

He is the current coach of the Macedonian national team.

Kitanovski B – Has played for the following club sides:

Radnicki Nis, Seville Spain

Savevski T – Vardar Skopje as well, as for AEK Athens.

Micevski T – Borusia Bellefield.

Nastevski Z – the best known to Australian Soccer fans in general, is Zlatko Nastevski.

He originated from Vardar Skopje, before coming out to play for Marconi in Sydney.

The ball-playing striker, was selected in the Australian national team.

Arguably the pinnacle of his stint in the NSL came when Zlatko was the sole goal scorer for Marconi in the 1989 Grand Final that Marconi won 1-0 against Sydney Olympic.

Also touring with F.C. Pelister are three current national team stars:

Stojkovski, Saveski & Siveski.

F.C. Pelister has a very strong support in Australia with 75% of the 600,000 strong Macedonian community from the Bitola region.

Games will be aired on SBS TV, Channel 31, and Macedonian PAY-TV with comprehensive coverage on Macedonian national broadcasters.

Local radio stations and newspapers will be promoting this event.

Vlado Vanis

FOOTBALL CLUB RED STAR

Osnovan/Founded: 04.03.1945.

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Tel: (+381 11) 3672 060, 3672 061; Fax: (+381 11) 3672 070

Klubske boje: Crveno-bola

Club colours: Red-White

Stadion/Stadium: "Crvena zvezda" "Red Star", Capacity: 54,000

President: Dragan Dzajic

General Manager: Vladimir Cvetkovic

Head Coach: Slavoljub Muslin

Prvak Jugoslavije/Yugoslav Champion: 21 times (1951, 1952/53, 1955/56, 1956/57, 1958/59, 1959/60, 1963/64, 1967/68, 1968/69, 1969/70, 1972/73, 1976/77, 1979/80, 1980/81, 1983/84, 1987/88, 1989/90, 1990/91, 1991/92, 1994/95, 1999/2000.)

Pobedruk Kupa Joguslavije/Yugoslav Cup Winner: 18 times (1948, 1949, 1950, 1958, 1959, 1963/64, 1967/68, 1969/70, 1970/71, 1981/82, 1984/8, 1989/90, 1990/91, 1991/92, 1994/95, 1999/2000.)

Double Crown: 7 times (1958/59, 1963/64, 1967/68, 1969/70, 1989/90, 1994/95, 1999/2000.)

Yugoslav Super Champion: twice (1969, 1971)

Yugoslav Champions League Winner: twice (1972, 1973)

Yugoslav League Cup Winner: once (1972/73)

Pobednik Intekontinentalnog kupa

Inter-continental Cup Winner: 1991.

Pobednik kupa evropskih sampiona

European Champions Cup Winner: 1990/91

European Champions Cup: semi-finalist (1956/57, 1970/71)

European Cup Winners Cup: semi-finalist (1974/75

UEFA Cup: finalist (1978/79)

Mitropa Cup Winner: 1968

Danube Cup Winner: 1958

Red Star 2001

MZJ Sports Entertainment

Proudly Presents:

January 16

Sydney Olympic v FC Pelister

Marconi Stadium 7.30pm

January 19

Preston Macedonia v FC Pelister

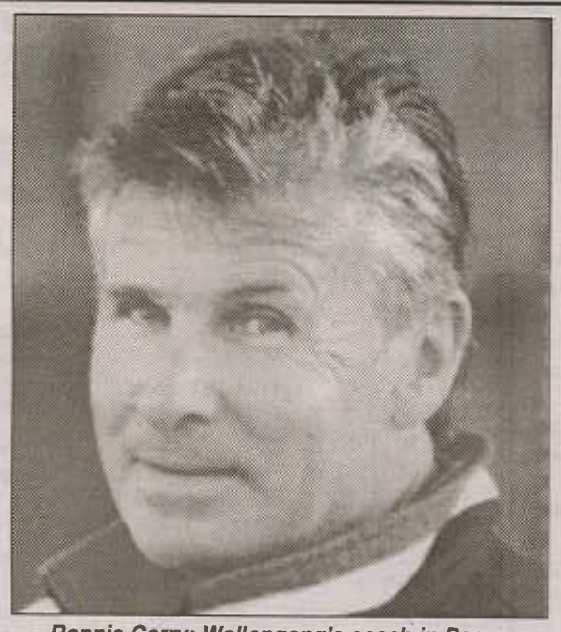
Preston Reserve Melbourne 6.30pm

January 21

Melbourne Knights v FC Pelister

Knights Stadium Sunshine 6.00pm

The Good Oil ... The Good Oil ...



Ronnie Corry: Wollongong's coach in Papua New Guinea.

THE PERTH GLORY's away game against John Kosmina's Brisbane Strikers originally set down to be played on Sunday, 22nd April, has now been re-scheduled to be played on Friday, April 20th at 7.30pm at Ballymore in Brisbane.

Bobby Despotovski: Glory's intelligent striker.

●●●●

MARCONI is set to play an exhibition match at the Marconi Stadium, against high quality international opposition.

On Wednesday 31st January, Marconi will take on the crack team from the Yugoslav first division, Red Star Belgrade.

Kick off has been scheduled to start at 7.30pm.

Dominic Longo: Marconi's robust centre-back and captain.

Sydney Olympic will also play a game against the touring Macedonian side, Pelister F.C., at the Marconi Stadium tonight, (Tuesday 16th January), with kick also set down for 7.30pm.

●●●●

Soccer fans wishing to send to the Wollongong Wolves who are currently in Port Morseby, Papua New Guinea for the Oceania qualifiers to the FIFA World Club Championship, made do so by faxing their messages to:

THE ISLANDER TRAVELODGE, PORT MORESBY.

The hotel fax number is 011 675 325 0837.

***'Good Oil'* firmly believes that the Wollongong players, (and current Australian League champions), as well as coach Ronnie Corry and his coaching staff would love to hear from our readers.**

●●●●

MANIS LAMOND, former Canberra City and Sydney Croatia's flying flanker, got himself married would you believe, last week?

Manis these days lives in New Guinea.

Manis' brother, Robert, also just happens to be the assistant manager of the 'Islander Travelodge' Hotel at Port Morseby, where the Wollongong Wolves are currently based for the Oceania Club Championship qualifiers.

And according to the reports 'Good Oil' has received from the Wollongong squad, the service has been nothing short of excellent.

The most jovial Manis, it seems, still carries a lot of pull where-ever he is.

Even overseas, when it comes to anything involving Australians, Manis is there at the crease.

Well done Manis.

●●●●

SYDNEY OLYMPIC, as from tomorrow, (Wednesday), will be holding a media luncheon every Wednesday afternoon, from now on at their Social club, for the Sydney based journailsts.

The idea is for the journos to turn up, eat and be able to interview coach Branko Culina and Olympic's General manager, Peter Raskopoulos for the coming match on that weekend.

Branko Culina: Sydney Olympic's coach.

Manis Lamond: Got himself married last week in New Guinea.

●●●●

THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SOCCER FEDERATION's brand new 'Summer Night Series', kicked off last night, (Monday January 15th), at the Hindmarsh Stadium.

General manager of the S.A. Federation, Mr Tony Farrugia, stated: "Hindmarsh Stadium, is the traditional home of Soccer in South Australia.

"Now with this new 'Summer Night Series', our local players have been given the chance to grace the turf of the Country's finest Football Stadium.

By John Economos

●●●●

DARREN McDONALD, Marconi's robust midfielder-cum-defender, flew out to Switzerland last Wednesday for further trials with the Bellinzona Club.

The highly energetic blond bombshell, already had trials with Bellinzona during the last NSL season where McDonald impressed Swiss club's coaching staff with his powerful style.

A firm offer had already been made for McDonald back then which Marconi was reluctant to accept.

Now the Swiss Club wanted to have another look at him again.

However now there appears to be another bidder, a club from the Italian Serie A, that is seeking McDonald for trials.

Darren McDonald: Left last week for Switzerland to trial with Bellinzona.

●●●●

ANTE JURIC, Sydney Olympic's lanky captain and sweeper, once again proved to be his team's silent hero.

Last Friday night the gallant skipper scored Olympic's winning goal, two minutes into stoppage time against a luckless Newcastle United up at the Marathon Stadium.

The late winning goal, (something which Olympic has made a habit of this season-in fact four times in four games), gave Juric's side yet another three precious League points.

As he did last season, whenever Olympic appears to struggle in the scoring department, Juric in true captain's fashion, makes his galloping raids from the back to either score, or set up Olympic life-saving goals.

Despite suffering from an injury to his heel, Juric still took the field after having a pain-killing injection.

Ante Juric: Sydney Olympic's heroic captain.

●●●●

THE WOLLONGONG WOLVES, currently over in tropical New Guinea, remain undefeated after having played their first three games in Group A of the Oceania qualifiers.

The winner will advance through to the ultra cash-lucrative second FIFA World Club Championship Finals that will be staged later this year in Spain.

In this gruelling crusade, the Wollongong Wolves are steaming ahead and well on course for the mega-bucks, ($5 million), that awaits the winner of the Oceania qualifiers.

Wollongong has played three, scored 31, conceded none.

Makes you wonder why the Australian League Champion's coach, Ronnie Corry, bothered to even take two goalkeepers with him.

Maybe they had the need for some Duty Free shopping.

A great start, sure.

Wollongong was scheduled to play their fourth match late yesterday, after ABSW went to press, against the Champions of P.N.G., Unitech F.C.

But the real test for the Wolves comes tomorrow night, (Wednesday).

That's when the Australian champions have to stack up against the harder, more organised and more physical League champions of New Zealand, Napier City Rovers.

To date, Corry has done an absolutely marvellous job.

He's great international experience has guided him in his excellent rotation of his full squad.

Corry's herculean battle from the very beginning was to keep his players as fresh as possible over such a congested tournament, (seven games in 14 days).

His biggest hurdle unquestionably, is the fatigue factor.

Keeping his squad members injury-free, as well as their endurance levels intact whilst playing in tropical climatic conditions, have been Corry's targets from Day One.

This gruelling tournament will never be forgotten by the Wollongong players.

Let's all hope that Corry is able to successfully finish the job, (360 minutes of Soccer left), so that he, his squad and the Wollongong Club can be well rewarded in Spain.

●●●●

Grant Barlow: Wollongong's goalkeeper.

SOUTH MELBOURNE's clean sheet last Sunday night at the Bob Jane Stadium against the Auckland Kingz was the team's sixth consecutive clean sheet.

This has served as a vivid warning that Mickey Petersen's Victorian giants are seriously threatening the League Championship.

The three unanswered goals scored against the Kiwis, have cemented Souths at the top of the League ladder, four clear points ahead of the Perth Glory, Wollongong Wolves, (game in hand), and Sydney Olympic.

Fausto de Amicis: Souths' international left defender.

After 14 Rounds, Souths have hit the target 29 times.

More importantly however, Souths have conceded a miserly eight goals to boast by far the very best defensive statistic in the nation.

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Power's Manager Shock Resignation

Parramatta Power's inaugural General manager, Brad Levy, last week announced his resignation from the position he has held since September 1999, citing personal reasons for his decision.

The super-efficient Levy, who assisted in preparing the Club for its first two seasons in the National Soccer League, leaves the Power Club in excellent shape.

"I feel comfortable leaving the Power with the team performing so well on the pitch at both first grade and Youth levels. Our criteria submission for entry into the 2001/2002 NSL Competition, has been lodged with Soccer Australia, and the Club is working to budget and has finalised its three year Business Plan, all of which should see us as a long-term major player in Soccer within Australia," Levy said.

"My time at the Power has been most enjoyable. It is a thrill to have seen the team string a record five wins together, attendances on the rise at the Parramatta Stadium, and witnessing the emergence of young talent such as Brendon Santalab, Mark Byrnes, Brett Holman, Ahmad Elrich, Michael Brown and Pedj Bojic has also been very exciting.

"The transfer of former Power players, Mile Sterjovski and Jacob Burns to Lille and Leeds United respectively has also been a highlight. It is expected that several other promising young players will get their opportunities in the near future," Levy explained.

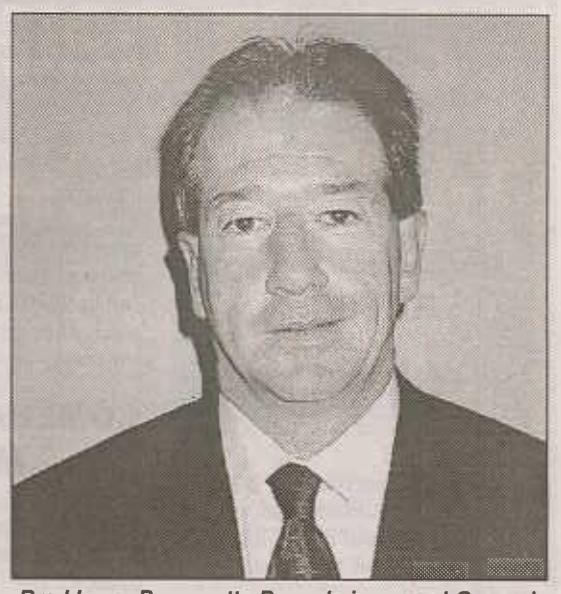
In recent weeks, Mr Levy has been responsible for bringing two overseas clubs — Leeds United and Dundee — to the table to discuss potential partnerships with the Parramatta Power, decisions in relation to which will be made later this month.

"The very positive and productive work that has been done in a relatively short space of time, has been incredible. We aimed to "lift the bar" in Australian Soccer, and I believe we are currently achieving that goal.

"I would very much like to acknowledge the tremendous support that I received both personally and professionally from the Power Board, Management, Players and Staff," ended Mr Levy.

Mr Levy left Parramatta Power last Wednesday, 10 January 2001.

Meanwhile, Greg Mitchell will fill the role as acting General Manager at the Power in the interim period whilst the Board seeks a suitable replacement to fill the big shoes that Mr Levy has left behind him.



Brad Levy: Parramatta Power's inaugural General Manager.

Red Star Arrives Tomorrow

By Dougie Utjesenovic (Former Australian) (World Cup defender)

RED STAR of BELGRADE, the crack Yugoslav team, and one of Europe's finest, arrives in Sydney tomorrow afternoon, (Wednesday), for its Australian tour which kicks off from January 18 through to February 6.

Red Star will play two games in Sydney, January 18th against the NSW Premier League side, Bonnyrigg White Eagles, and on January 31st—against NSL outfit, Marconi.

As well, Red Star will play exhibition games in Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne as well as in Wollongong.

The 22 times League Champions of Yugoslavia, 17 times Winners of the Yugoslav Cup, UEFA Cup Finalists and the 1991 European and World Champions, Red Star is the most popular and best supported Club in Yugoslavia with a huge following worldwide.

Players such as Sekularac, Djic, Savicevic and Stojkovic to name just a few, are all products of the Red Star School of Soccer.

The Red Star Coach, Slavoljub Muslin, is a former Yugoslav national team player. Besides playing for Red Star, Muslin played professionally in France and coached professionally in France with Bordeaux and Casablanca in Morocco. Muslin has coached many famous players including, Zidane, Ginola, Lama and Dougarie.

With Red Star, Muslin won the League championship and Yugoslav Cup in the 1999/2000 season.

This touring team consists of very talented young players which includes five current Yugoslav national team members, plus one Slovanian national team player.

Players such as goalkeeper Aleksanda Kocic, captain Goran Bunjevcevic, Milenko Acimovic, Branko Boskovic and Ivan Vukomanovic, are the players who are already firmly established in the European Soccer circles.

The deadly striking duo of Mihaljo Pjanovic and Goran Drulic are two of the most feared strikers in the Yugoslav National League. Drulic was a former member of F.C. Barcelona of Spain.

Former national team and A.C. Milan star, Dejan Savicevic, has a very high opinion of this young generation of Red Star players.

Savicevic strongly believes these young stars will be able to achieve more than any previous generations.

Yugoslav Soccer had suffered a great deal due to sanctions imposed on the country, preventing it from playing in International competitions for a long period of time.

In the last two years, Red Star has achieved success in the European competitions and the star-studded team is still ranked overall as the 11th most successful Club in the World.

We are sure that Australian fans are going to be treated to some real top class Soccer.

This Australian tour by Red Star will prove to be a truly unforgettable spectacle for the Soccer followers.

Red Star Belgrade celebrate their UEFA Cup win late last year over England's Leicester City.

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SYDNEY: Thursday 18th January. *Start 8pm*
White Eagles v Red Star (White Eagle Stadium — Bonnyrigg)
ADELAIDE: Sunday 21st January. *Start 7.30pm*
Adelaide City v Red Star (Hindmarsh Stadium)
PERTH: Sunday 28th January. *Start 7.30pm*
State Team v Red Star (Litis Stadium — former Velodrom)
SYDNEY: Wednesday 31st January. *Start 7.30pm*
Marconi v Red Star (Marconi Stadium — Bossley Park)
MELBOURNE: Monday 5th February. *Start 7.30pm*
Fitzroy City (Serbia) v Red Star (Olympic Village Stadium)

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RED STAR PLAYERS ARE IN HIGH DEMAND: Milan (Italy) is looking for coach Slavoljub Muslin and player Goran Drulic. Fiorentina (Italy) for Pjanovic, Valencia (Spain) for Bunjevcevic, Lyon (France) for Lalatovic, Bordeaux (France) for Vukomanovic, Schalke 04 (Germany) for Djenic etc.

FOR MORE INFORMATION 0416 039 503, (02) 9602 6999

Manly Warringah Dolphins

The Manly Warringah Dolphins are inviting all experienced players to attend first grade trials for 2001. The first session commences at 6.30pm, Monday the 22nd of January at Cromer Park #1.

Contact Jeremy Toivonen on 0416 089 917 for further information.

OFF THE CROSSBAR

By Allan Crisp

DERBY RIVALRY REVIVED

When the West Adelaide Sharks folded, South Australia was left with Adelaide City Force as its sole NSL representative.

Apart from losing continuity of national competition, Adelaide also lost that vital commodity, that is the lifeblood of all competitive sport at national level — the derby.

However, the derby spirit has been revived, albeit, quite unintentionally, when the South Australian Soccer Federation launched its Summer Series yesterday (Monday).

Of the 20 teams competing, six are being coached by former West Adelaide Sharks players, while five are being guided by ex- Adelaide City stars.

Milan Ivanovic (White City Woodville), Neville Flounders (Adelaide City), David Leane (Noarlunga Bulldogs), Phil Scardigno (Croydon Kings) and Zoran Karadzic (Blue Eagles) are the local club mentors who previously played at NSL level for City.

The former Sharks players and their respective clubs are — Branko Milosevic (Olympic FC), Greg Mills (Para Hills Knights), Richard Preston (Cumberland Foxes), Nick Pantsaras (Western Strikers), Zoran Maricic (Birkalla) and Manuel (Manecas) Lopez (Adelaide Cobras).

Of that impressive coaching panel, Ivanovic and Milosevic represented Australia with distinction, while Manecas played for the Angola national team.

And, the pleasing trend of past players continuing to contribute to the game as coaches extends in the Summer Series with Jan Kierno (Campbelltown Red Devils), Greg Kalinovic (Port Lion Pirates), Trevor Jenkinson (Seaford), Anthony Best (Panthers), Mario Boffa (Metro Stars), Duane Gray (Modbury Jets), Craig Leith (Hills Hawks) and Tony LaScala (Enfield Falcons), all making the transition.

Best, the youngest of the clip-board magicians, will be a player-coach for the Panthers, while Ivanovic has decided to don the White City Woodville strip on the occasions he deems it necessary to direct proceedings on the park.

COMEBACK BID BY MAXIE

Former Adelaide City and Socceroo striker Steve Maxwell has answered a comeback call from Hills Hawks coach Craig Leith.

Steve Maxwell: Former Socceroo to make a comeback for Hills Hawks.

Maxwell, 35, a close friend of Leith has agreed to assist in the coaching duties and will test his resolve by taking the field as a player.

"I intend to ease myself in gradually," Maxwell said. "I may last a month or I might see out the entire Summer Series, but I'm keen to give it a try."

Maxwell said the added incentive of again treading the lush Hindmarsh Stadium turf was far too great to resist.

STRIKERS BLESSED

Western Strikers coach Nick Pantsaras cannot believe his luck in having such luminaries as Mario Corti and Mario Danielli on his coaching staff.

Ex-Italian professional player Corti is the skills coach and highly qualified mentor Danielli refines the junior teams' tactics.

Meanwhile, midfielder Damian Thomas has returned from a four-weekís trial with Stoke City and is ready for Summer Series action.

At the experienced end of the playing staff, George Konstandopoulos has recovered from a hernia operation and will be introduced gradually to the Strikers squad.

CONCLUSIVE

One of the wonderful aspects of sport is the lively debate that the many controversial incidents spark.

After the Adelaide City-Parramatta match at Hindmarsh Stadium on Friday, January 5, fans raged hard and long over the fifth minute strike from the Powerís Scottish import Joe Miller.

Some declared it a goal, others said it wasn't, while others thought it was too close to call.

To the naked eye, it certainly was a touch and go decision, but through the marvels of television freeze frame technology this reporter can conclusively declare that the entire circumference of the ball did not cross the goalline.

Miller's shot went through City goalkeeper Adrian Cagalj's legs and was headed for the net, but brilliant cover defence from Gianluca Lagati enabled the Italian import to clear by a whisker.

Lagati raced back into the goal and was on the line when he put boot to ball, but fell back into the goal after clearing.

DELAY OVER STADIUM

The issue over who should assume control of Hindmarsh Stadium (ABSW January 9) is continuing and looks likely to drag on for some time with the delay likely to impact badly on the South Australian Soccer Federation and the Adelaide City club.

The SASF has agreed to the State Government taking over, but the process has been slowed because the Government requires the stadium owners, Charles Sturt Council, to take out a mortgage on the site.

The Council has twice deferred a vote on whether the Government should be allowed to mortgage the stadium, declaring it did not have sufficient information about the implications of such a move.

Deputy Premier Rob Kerin has no doubts that unless the switch to Government control is allowed, Adelaide City Force and the federation would be confronted by "dire financial consequences."

"There are dire consequences for the team (City) and the federation. It's a very serious issue (and) the council needs to take that into account," Mr Kerin said.

SASF general manager, Tony Farrugia reiterated that his federation was keen to see the deal with the Government proceed.

"There are financial consequences when the stadium has only one tenant when it used to have three," Mr Farrugia said, in referring to the demise of the West Adelaide Sharks and the Adelaide Rams rugby league club.

RADIO WOES

Radio 5RPH has lost John Perin as a regular panel member of its Breakfast Soccer Show that is aired each Tuesday from 7.30am-9am.

Business commitments will prevent the former Australian international from continuing in his studio role, but the left-footed legend will be available for recorded phone interviews when he has a topic to release from his manly chest.

Johnny Perin: Former Adelaide City International.

Meanwhile, ABSW reporter, Allan Crisp and Channel 10 sports presenter, Robbie Popplestone welcome ex-Adelaide City midfielder and Croydon Kings coach, "Fabulous" Phil Scardigno to the Marshall Thompson Homes, Pacific Real Estate Breakfast Soccer Show.

BULJAN BOUND FOR BRISBANE

Peter Buljan: Set to wear the Blue and Gold of Brisbane.

By Glenn Davis

Perth Glory striker Peter Buljan may soon be wearing the blue and gold colours of the Brisbane Strikers for the remainder of the season if transfer negotiations are soon resolved.

The Strikers have been hunting for a replacement for injured goal scorer Paul Foster who is out for the remainder of the season with a knee injury.

Strikers coach John Kosmina first spoke with Buljan about moving to Brisbane last year but the former Canberra forward grabbed the opportunity to go fulltime with Perth Glory.

Buljan has been unable to cement a regular first team place with Perth this season but Kosmina believes heíd make a worthy replcement for Foster.

"He's a good player," Kosmina said.

"I had discussions about him coming to us before he went to Perth but he's been in and out of their side this year.

"He was a regular when he was with Canberra and heíd make a good replacement for Fossy."

Brisbane Strikers had bye last weekend because of Carlton pulling out of the league but did not have the weekend off after Kosmina ordered a Sunday night training session following their 7-2 drubbing by Perth.

The Strikers have had a shocking run of injuries this season and are sitting near the bottom of the table.

Despite their position, the Strikers' management have declared their full support for Kosmina.

Strikers chairman Ross Melville said Kosmina's position was not in doubt and was confident the Strikers could turn their season around.

Kosmina is in his third season with the Strikers and is set to join Bruce Stowell as the clubís longest serving coach.

Brisbane suffered their biggest losses before the season started when defender Glen Gwynne was outed for theseason with a knee injury while long serving keeper Clint Bolton moved to Sydney after seven years with the club.

On top of those losses, Kosmina recently lost Foster for the remainder of the season and fellow midfielder-striker Peter Grierson has been sidelined for more than six weeks with a mysterious stomach ailment.

"We're playing well in most games but we'd have a shocking run of injuries," Kosmina said.

"We've been making mistakes through a lack of concentration but that comes with time and experience.

"We couldnít really afford to lose Clint (Bolton) at the beginning of the year but I don't blame him and then we lost Gywnnie before the season started.

"With Foster and Grierson out as well, thatís close to a third of the team."

Meanwhile rumours in Queensland soccer circles claim a leading Brisbane premier league club with the support of a top official is looking to takeover the struggling Mt Gravatt Workers club.

The Mt Gravatt Workers club, which houses local soccer and Australian Rules clubs, is currently in the hands of receivers.

Queensland Soccer Federation general manager Steve Wilson said he had heard the rumours but was unaware of the alleged takeover.

LEEDS EYE KNIGHTS

By Bert van Bedaf

NOT only Sydney Olympic or newly formed Western Lightning are on the list of Leeds United, seeking talks with chairman Peter Ridsdale.

The Melbourne Knights have also caught the eye of the English Premier League giant with a view of establishing financial backing.

Knights general manager Robert Hrzic confirmed the club had attracted "an expression of interest" from Leeds, which has a number of Australian players under contract, including Knights' favourite son Mark Viduka as well as Harry Kewell.

Viduka's worth to the Knights may again be almost priceless. The club has earned more than $1 million from Viduka's transfers and it already hasnamed its grandstand after him. But a close relationship with Leeds could considerably enhance the club's future stability and playing stature.

Several Sydney clubs have been rumored to be on Leeds' list as overseas interest in Australian clubs is growing. Already, Sydney's Northern Spirit has a majority ownership by Scottish club Glasgow Rangers.

Peter Ridsdale: Leeds United chairman.

A Leeds rival, Newcastle United was considering buying into Carlton before the Melbourne club folded.

"We don't know how interested Leeds are, but we've spoken indirectly with parties connected to Leeds. There's been an expression of interest.

That's all," Hrzic said.

"There hasn't been a sitting down around the table for discussions.

Leeds are interested in a number of clubs and the Knights are one of those.

We're hoping to hear from them.

"We'd be looking at a partnership, that's the keyword, rather than ownership. If the right offer would come along, we'd consider it," he said.

BRAVISSIMO FOR COLOSIMO

By Bert van Bedaf

Former Blues star Simon Colosimo made his anticipated debut for South Melbourne against New Zealand's Football Kingz at Bob Jane Stadium last Sunday.

The exciting midfielder came on as a substitute in the 72nd minute. He received the biggest cheers of the night, taking a part in one of the three South goals that sank the Kingz, 3-0, in the hot Melbourne night.

A free agent after Carlton folded last month, Colosimo joined the Lakesiders a week ago.

Colosimo admitted, it had been a tough run in 36 degrees heat, even at 8pm, and "after being out of the game for six weeks."

"But I'm just happy to be playing again," Colosimo said. "I was close to signing with South Melbourne at the start of the season.

Simon Colosimo: Made his debut for South last Sunday.

"A successful stint with South will help me regain my spot with the Socceroos. It's time to knuckle down and get some games under my belt and then we'll see how I go with the Socceroos," he said.

South coach Mike Petersen said the 22-year-old who signed for the remainder of the season would have to earn his spot in a settled side, bursting with talent and experience.

"It'll be hard for Simon to get a regular kick here, but hopefully it's going to be a win-win situation for Simon and South Melbourne for the rest of the season," Petersen said.

See match report on page 11.

CALLS FOR REFORMS GROW LOUDER

By Bert van Bedaf

On the Chinese calendar, apparently, this is the year of the snake. In the grand design of Australian soccer, it is rapidly developing into the year of the breakaways.

Not only is there a breakaway plan for an NSL second division in train, the NSL itself is facing the prospect of an alternative competition.

In the wake of the Carlton collapse and the lack of comprehensive reforms, the Professional Footballers Association has registered the name of a new national competition, the Australian Premier League.

The registration of the APL has put Soccer Australia on notice that its reform process must proceed as planned and as soon as possible.

This should include the planned reduction of NSL teams from 16 to 12, but also the creation of a "stable and viable competition", improved marketing and promotion, as well as better facilities and a higher standard of play, according to PFA chief executive Brendan Schwab.

Schwab has also called for an independent board of commissioners to regulate the national competition.

Both reform pushers, the PFA and the second divisioners under the banner of the United Soccer League of Australia, have held the mirror up to Soccer Australia, telling it the sport's imperfect visage drastically has to improve, if soccer it to break through as a major sport in Australia, gain substantial sponsorship and far better national coverage than it is currently getting from commercial television.

USLA organiser, Adelaide Olympic secretary Andrew Haralampopoulos is confident a two-conference competition of eight clubs each can be formed and become the second tier to the NSL in a promotion and relegation structure.

"We don't want to be an outlaw competition. But we have taken the initiative for the creation of a second tier to the national league," Haralampopoulos said.

Jeff Kennett: Former Victorian Premier calling for reforms.

Discussions have been held between the USLA and Soccer Australia to examine the proposal.

Victorian Premier League club Bulleen is all in favor of a second NSL division and has put its support behind the initiative.

"If soccer in Australia is to improve, this is the way to do it," Bulleen president George Mirabella said.

But the most prominent agent of change to lash out last week on Melbourne radio and metropolitan media was none other than former Premier Jeff Kennett.

With strong former connections to soccer as South Melbourne's No.1 ticket holder and in an honorary capacity with the Victorian Soccer Federation, Kennett led the charge in a failed attempt to form a bid to lure a future World Cup to Australia several years ago.

Now he's raising his profile in the current reform climate. There's been a popular swell of support lately for him to take over from Basil Scarcella as Soccer Australia chairman. But Kennett has ruled himself out, citing more pressing pursuits, such as golf.

But he did voice his opinion on the state of soccer in Australia. The former premier has boldly called on clubs to walk out on the NSL and start afresh.

"You've got to say to clubs, if they want to play in a premier league, why don't they walk away from Soccer Australia and start their own competition," Kennett said, blithely discarding FIFA rules or regulations.

"Compared to other football codes, the soccer administration in this country is a national disgrace. Until someone takes soccer by the throat and cleans it out, anyone putting money into it is wasting their time.

"There are people in Australia, who'd be prepared to make soccer work.

There are sponsors prepared to back it, but not under the people currently administrating it.

"We've had a period of leaders who failed to think long-term. Many of them have been involved for their self-interests. Many have been named in reports with recommendations they'd no longer be involved in soccer at the highest level. Yet, they've continued to do so.

"We've got to be serious about soccer in this country, so, let's start again," he said.

Outspoken Northern Spirit forward Robbie Slater backed Kennett in his remarks.

Robbie Slater: Says Jeff Kennett "hit the nail on the head."

"Kennett hit the nail on the head," the former international said on SBS's On The Ball program.

"The situation of the NSL is such that the registration of the Australian Premier League can cause such a fuss. Soccer Australia should take note of what is going on in the game. A bona fide restructure is necessary," he said.

LABBOZZETTA REJECTS COMMENTS

By Bert van Bedaf

Soccer Australia commissioner, NSL chairman and Marconi power Tony Labbozzetta rejected statements by former Victorian premier Jeff Kennett which appeared directed at him and others.

Kennett referred to people "named in reports with recommendations they'd no longer be involved in soccer at the highest level. Yet, they've continued to do so."

Labozzetta said Kennett could be referring to him and (outgoing Soccer Australia chairman) Basil Scarcella, who he said had been mentioned in reports concerning soccer inquiries in the past.

"He could be referring to me and Basil. But we hung in there and we cleared ourselves. In fact, we were cleared," Labbozzetta said.

If Kennett knew anything about the NSL, he wouldn't do this, But this isn't Kennett talking. There's a hidden agenda," Labbozzetta said, pointing to Soccer Australia's annual general meeting and the election of a new chairman next month, following Scarcella's election as president of the Oceania Football Confederation.

"It's obviously over the chairman issue. There's an agenda, but I don't have a problem with that," Labbozzetta said.

Labbozzetta said he was still considering standing for the SA chairmanship. He said he rejected the idea that a (former) politician, for example Kennett, should be drafted into the position.

"We've had our lessons. People in the game will decide that we'll have someone from within the sport," he said.

Labbozzetta said the immediate issues were "to get the game united", strategic planning and reform, such as cutting the NSL from 16 to 12 clubs.

"I support the changes. One of the reasons that I didn't support the changes before was because there was no due process or plan. But now clubs are fully aware of what they have to comply with."

Labbozzetta said he was not in favor of an independent board of commissioners running soccer. "I don't see a need for it."

He said was aware of the United Soccer League of Australia's plans to set up a second division.

"The USLA has spoken with me. A lot of work still needs to take place before a second league can be implemented. We've been talking about it for 23 years.

"Ideally, the states should conduct some form of play-off competition to provide clubs with an incentive. But it's up to the states to come up with an initiative."

He believed a second division of the NSL could work, but the priority should be to fix the existing league first.

"I have never been against a second division, but we need to get the first division fixed and then work out a plan when the second division can take place," he said.

He had little comment on a decision by the Professional Footballers Association to register the Australian Premier League.

"As far as the APL is concerned, anyone can register a company name, including (PFA chief executive) Brendan Schwab," Labbozzetta said.

Tony Labbozzetta: Soccer Australia Commissioner.

Letters to the Editors

"NO" TO OVERSEAS OWNERSHIP

Dear Sir,

After watching the return of "On the Ball" on SBS (Sunday Jan 7th), I could not help but wonder whether the idea of British clubs buying into the NSL Club's is a good idea, or not.

From what I have seen and heard so far, I think not.

Bringing money and expertise by the British clubs into Australian Soccer, sounds great. But will it benefit the game here?

If it's only to develop youngsters for their England or Scottish based clubs, then a big question mark hangs over their involvement.

If that is their intention, then I would prefer local based Ethnic clubs to foreign owned clubs any day of the week. At least they will try and get as much money as they can in transfer fees for players going to Europe. That's something that Foreign owned clubs won't have to face.

Ethnic based clubs may be handicapped in appealing to mainstream Australian outside of their ethnic base, but foreign involvement or part ownership, is no help for crowd improvements either.

If anything, they are just as handicapped as the Northern Spirit has found out.

If you are a Scot, or even an English supporter of the Spirit, but hate the Glasgow Rangers, you are not going to follow, or support that Club anymore. Let's face it, most true Soccer supporters of non ethnic background are mainly British expatriots, who have not succumbed to the highly publicised local football codes such as Aussie Rules and Rugby League, as the second and third generation of their off spring have. Therefore, most of them still follow, (or at least support), one of their teams back home in the Old country. That's exactly why the Spirit's support has now been cut in half, (if not lower), than before the Rangers' involvement. If Leeds United gets involved with a local team, Soccer Australia should make sure that it's with an ethnic based club, or not at all. Otherwise mainstream clubs will suffer the Carlton syndrome, which the Spirit is going through now.

That syndrome means with 20 teams in the English Premier League, and 10 in the Scottish League, the majority of supporters in Australia will not support a team owned by Glasgow Rangers, Leeds United or any other team from the British or European Leagues.

Dominic Scullino
Nerang, QLD.

ARNIE STRUGGLING

Dear Sir,

Northern Spirit is indeed an amazing Soccer club. It began life in a blaze of glory, promising much, only to fall from grace just as fast.

It was rescued from almost certain death by Glasgow Rangers for reasons which are beyond the comprehension of this simple soul. During all this time Graham Arnold has survived as coach.

Correct me if I am wrong, but has there ever been another NSL coach who has consistently failed to deliver and held his job for so long? Under Arnie, the Spirit has played far too much ineffective and unattractive football, despite having a useful bunch of full-time players. He has been unable to get the best out of them and weld them into a formidable combination.

When Rangers took over, some people thought Arnie's days as coach were over.

He survived, but since then the situation has deteriorated further, making his position untenable.

When a coach loses the respect and confidence of both the players and hard core supporters, the end is ??

The excuses put out in Arnie's defence are pathetic and laughable. In fact the longer the Spirit delays the decision, the more damage it will do to the club.

I have nothing personal against Graham Arnold, in fact I regard him as a truly significant Australian Soccer player.

Graham Arnold

However, as the saying goes "horses for courses" and as far as coaching goes at NSL level, Arnie just hasn't got what it takes. As history shows, he is in good company. Look at all the top player/ coaches.

R. Melor
Bondi, NSW.

COACHING KIDS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Dear Sir,

I would like to thank ABSW, in particular Chief writer, John Economos in his "Good Oil" section of the Soccer paper, for mentioning the work I'm doing in Cebu, the Philippines, two weeks ago.

Being called a 'philanthropist', (as he did), is a first for me.

My work in the Philippines could not be possible without the full financial support of a Cebu businessman, **Mr Michel Lhillier.** Together, we formed the **M. Lhuillier Sports Development Foundation, (MLSDF),** back in 1994, with a vision to promote Soccer in Cebu, an area of the Philippines where basketball reigns supreme, and no other sport comes close in popularity.

The Under 8 kids, whose photo appeared in ABSW's edition two weeks ago, are from Carmen, a town situated some 40kms north of Cebu City. There are now two Soccer teams in Carmen.

The other team which I formed in 1995, is also a part of the **MLSDF**, grassroots development program. The original team had never seen a game of Soccer when they began to play Soccer.

Cable TV was not available then in the town, and even now my co-coach, Mario Ceniza, is one of the few who has cable TV. The young boys flock to his house to watch the Soccer every week.

The original team is now the Under 14s.

Following their unprecedented 13 straight wins in the Visayas Cup, last May/June, (as reported by Mr Economos two weeks ago), against traditional Soccer regions Dumaguete, Bacolod and Iloilo, they are now fast gaining a reputation as being the best team for their age, in the entire Philippines.

There is no Soccer field in Carmen, nor is there any formal Soccer competitions on a weekly seasonal basis at any age, among the schools, or the Cebu Football Association.

As I drive around Sydney, (whilst here for a short break), and see so many playing fields, I greatly envy the sports grassroots programs that has been put in place here in Australia.

My belief in the national talent of these kids, and that Soccer is a sport for the physique of the Filipino, (not Basketball), is all the motivation I need to continue my work there, frustrating as that may be, sometimes. Australia is undoubtedly the lucky country.

My work in Cebu has given me some opportunities that I would not have experienced had I stayed in Sydney.

Through the Foundation, plus the great support of Mr Lhuillier, I have participated in a three week coaching seminar held in Brazil that was organised by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), as well as being fortunate to visit England twice to observe the training methods of the juniors at Leeds United in 1997.

Whilst at Leeds, I met Harry Kewell, as well as being able to go and see Manchester United last October.

In 1997 we also brought two young boys from the Philippines to Sydney, where they both enrolled into the Marconi Coaching Camp.

I would love to bring the whole team to Sydney and play some games here, as well as play in the Kanga Cup in Canberra.

At this time financial constraints make that desire a dream. I hope that dream becomes a reality one day. More power to you and thanks again.

Graeme Mackinnon.
Cebu. The Philippines.

Harry Kewell: Leeds United striker.

Editor's Note.
(Graeme played for the old Apia Club as a striker, back in very late 60s and early 70s).

CAN MONO ETHNIC CLUBS SURVIVE?

Dear Sir,

With the supposed introduction of a 12 team NSL competition for the 2001-2002 season, an argument that will not go away, is the ethnic issue.

It is hard to accept that teams which rely on mono-ethnic support will be considered ahead of any other team that actually represents a geographical area.

But that's been the problem for 30 years or more.

Lack of action by the National body, (Soccer Australia), has allowed these clubs to prosper at the expense of truly geographically based clubs, and the notion that the Ethnics have been the only reason the game has survived in Australia, has been used to great affect.

It was interesting to note that once again, the panel on "On The Ball", screened by SBS, continues to support mono-ethnic clubs and never raise the issue of a geographical base in relation to these clubs.

Peter Raskopoulos: Sydney Olympic's General manager.

Johnny Warren, former Australian World Cup captain), actually went on to comment that it was exceptional that 14,000 "Greek" Australians had been at Bob Jane Stadium to witness the Greek derby. It's sad in the fact that 150 other nationalities, not withstanding dinky di Australians, were excluded, due to their origins.

On the same panel was guest, Peter Raskopoulos, (former captain of Sydney Olympic-now that Club's General manager), who intimidated that Olympic were going to move to the Eastern or Southern region of Sydney, to occupy a geographical niche.

It would be interesting to note if Olympic is actually going to change it's name and colours so that those people living in that area, can feel they are a part of their newly-acquired team.

But alas, I fear the joke will be on them, as it is on the majority of us.

It would be of interest if a case exists whereby mono-ethnic clubs discriminate against the majority of Australians, and if that would stand up in a court of law.

Stephen Prednz
Newcastle, NSW.

'THANKS ABSW', SAYS SOUTHS

To John Economos.
ABSW's Chief Writer.

Dear John,

On behalf of the South Melbourne Soccer Club, I wish to thank you for your invaluable contribution towards our big clash against Sydney Olympic, played on Saturday, 30th December, 2000.

Despite the hectic festive period, your crew produced a magnificent full colour advertisement, which was accompanied by your inspirational match preview.

As Australia's leading publication, we have no doubt that ABSW played an integral role in attracting the record crowd.

Paul Trimboli: South Melbourne's captain/striker.

On a final note, we are sincerely grateful for your kind words regarding the marketing behind the big game. It's extremely satisfying when an organisation such as ABSW acknowledges the time and commitment involved in promoting our sport, especially over the Christmas period and in an AFL saturated state such as Victoria.

Thank you once again for your contribution towards the Olympic game and for your support of the South Melbourne Soccer Club.

Wollongong Wolves' Oceania Club Championship

WOLVES OPENING 16

GAME 1

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 16
LOTOHA'PAI — (Tonga) 0

The Wollongong Wolves opening their World Club Championship in Port Moresby last week, with an easy 16-0 victory over Tonga's Lotohai'Pai.

In oppressive first half heat, it took striker Saso Petrovski 17 minutes to score the first, of what was to become his seven goal, first half Festival.

Scott Chipperfield added the other to make it 8-0 by the time Vanuatu's referee Len Fred whistled for the break.

The Tongans, couldn't cope with the speed and craft of a well organised Wolves' juggernaut, instead falling back to pack a defence and relying on sheer numbers in the penalty box, to try stem the tide of prowling Wolves.

Saso Petrovski: Scored seven goals.

In the opening minutes of the second half, Chipperfield added his second from a well-timed Alvin Ceccoli pass. Chipperfield was another to complete a hat-trick, with second half replacement, Jay Lucas also netting three.

The final tally: Petrovski 7, Chipperfield 3, Lucas 3, Paul Reed 1, Stuart Young 1, and goalkeeper Daniel Beltrame scored from a penalty.

Second half replacements for the Wolves saw Lucas on for Chipperfield, Steve Dimitrievski on for David Huxley and Paul O'Grady replaced George Souris in defence.

The Wolves came out relatively injury free in spite of a crude tackle on skipper Matt Horsley in the closing minutes of the game.

WOLVES TOP GROUP A

GAME 2

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 5
FOODTOWN WARRIORS — (Fiji) 0

In spite of missing some 30 goal opportunities the Wollongong Wolves still managed to bag FIVE and move to the top of Group A in the World Club Championship held in Port Moresby.

The Wolves scored in the first and last minute of the game to defeat Fiji's Foodtown Warriors in front of a 2700 strong crowd.

The Wolves got off to a dream start when Paul Reid was pulled down in the penalty area after only 40 seconds of play. Stuart Young converted the spot kick.

Scott Chipperfield scored in the 10th and 38th minute making it 3-0 at half-time. He was to be replaced by Jay Lucas in the 67th minute, and adding to the tally in the 90th with the last goal of the match.

Paul Reid: Wollongong's industrious midfielder.

Saso Petrovski scored the Wolves' other goal in the 67th minute.

In other group A matches LUGA UNITED/SOLOMON ISLANDS and NAPIER/NZ drew 1-1 and UNITECH/PNG defeated LOTOHA'PAI/TONGA 5-2.

Whilst the ground remained dry today, the turf is deteriorating at such a rapid rate that a nearby school oval is being considered for some Group Matches.

The Wolves will have to lift their game somewhat and not be prodigal in front of goal against LAUGA UNITED/SOLOMON ISLANDS who are showing a strong professional approach to their game and earning their un-official 3rd Cede status. The Wolves met LAUGA UNITED in their next game scheduled for 5pm (Aust East coast DST) last Saturday.

By Johnny Warren
Our Correspondent
(in Port Moresby)

TABLE STANDINGS AFTER THREE MATCHES

	GF	GA	Pts
Wollongong	31	0	9
Napier/NZ	12	1	7
Unitech/PNG	9	5	6
Lauga/ Solomon Is.	4	11	4
Foodtown Warriors/Fiji	2	12	0
Lotoha'Pai/ Tonga	2	30	0

The protest by TAFEA-VANUATU in Group B, against inclusion of 11 PNSA/AMERICAN SAMOAN players registered in their line-up post to October's closing date — has been referred to FIFA who are expected to make a ruling on appeal tomorrow.

ROUND THREE RESULTS

UNITECH/PNG	4
FOODTOWN/FIJI	1
NAPIER/NZ	9
LOTOHA'PAI TONGA	0

WOLVES IGNITE

GAME 3

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 10
LAUGA UNITED — (Solomon Is) 0

The referee's whistle for full time seemed to be a cue for the final act in a Wagnerian Opera — THE FUSE BOX exploded next door to our commentary box — and we hastily abandoned it to the crackling flames.

Whilst all our previous concerns had been for the state of the pitch — now the state of the grandstand is also under question.

We were ushered to the Hotel, from where I'm filing this report, not knowing how much of the grandstand — if any — had been saved by the Fire Services.

But it was only in the second half that the Wolves really fired and I thought their 3-0 half-time lead was a little fortuitous. Again the Wolves got off to a dream start with a penalty in the 12th minute for a push behind play, with Stuart Young converting.

Scott Chipperfield intercepted a wayward pass between LAUGA/SOLOMON ISLAND defenders and calmly made it 2-0 in the 39th minute.

Dino Mennilo: Man of the Match.

Just four minutes later a brilliant pass from Dino Mennilo set Paul Reid on his way for the Wolves third.

The second half saw the Wolves move up a gear with Saso Petrovski scoring in the 50th minute following excellent lead work from Alvin Ceccoli and Dino Mennilo. This was by far the best goal of the game and going a long way in securing Dino Mennilo's Man-of-the-Match award.

In the 58th minute, David Huxley made it 5-0 from an excellent Chipperfield pass, with Chipperfield himself scoring less than five minutes later when he tapped in after a sizzler from Paul Reid was only part-parried by the LAUGA keeper.

Matt Horsley made it 7-0 with a clever and hastily taken free kick just outside the penalty area. Mennilo then converted from a perfect cross from the Wolves keeper jsut one minute later, 8-0.

In the 76th minute LAUGA's captain, Geoff Kwaoumai was sent from the field and David Cervinski added his name to the scorers' list with a crashing volley from the resultant free kick 9-0. Midfielder Paul Reid finished off the scoring by nailing in Wollongong's tenth goal.

Wolves coach, Ron Corry engaged three off the bench. Cervinski on for Huxley in the 60th minute, Rob Stanton on for Stuart Young in the 56th while George Nohra replaced Chipperfield in the 68th. Once again the Wolves came through without yellow card belemishes — and without injuries.

VICS HONOURED IN HALL OF FAME

By Bert van Bedaf

It took until 1999 to establish soccer's Hall of Fame in Sydney, but when it did it brought together the roll of honor of those who contributed significantly to the code in Australia, players, referees or administrators, during more than a century.

Among them are a host of great Victorians, such as Jimmy Rooney, whose name is on the Victorian Premier League best player grand final medal.

Paul Wade: Former International captain and midfielder.

Rooney joined the Essendon Lions in 1958 and represented Australia 100 times.

Or Eddie Krncevic. One of the first Australians to succeed overseas and a top scorer in Belgium in 1989, Krncevic played for the Melbourne Knights and Marconi in Sydney. The first coach of now defunct Carlton, he currently coaches Marconi.

There's Paul Wade. One of the great Socceroo captains, Wade represented Australia a record 119 times. He played for Green Gully, Brunswick Juventus and South Melbourne. Now a television commentator, Wade took on Argentina's Maradona in Australia's failed qualification bid for the 1994 USA World Cup.

The late Harry Dockerty gave his name to Victoria's Dockerty Cup in 1918, which sadly came to an end in 1997. Dockerty served three terms as VSF chairman in 58 years of service to soccer in this state.

Michael Weinstein served 20 years as VSF chairman and gave his name to the Weinstein medal for the best junior player of the year in Victoria.

Then there's Rale Rasic, the only Socceroo coach to take Australia to a World Cup in 1974. Rasic played for defunct Footscray JUST.

Chris Bambridge is one of Australia's most outstanding referees. President of the Victorian Referees Association, he officiated at the 1986 World Cup and 1988 Olympic Games.

There's also the late Jim Mackay, who scored the goals that qualified Australia for 1974 and Charlie Yankos, who represented Australia 98 times.

Or Socceroo Oscar Crino, who played for Preston and South Melbourne, and former Socceroo goal keeper Jeff Olver, who played for Heidelberg United, Bulleen and presently is youth coach at South Melbourne.

The late Sam Papasavas was president of South Melbourne from 1972 to 1993 as well as VSF president and Soccer Australia (then ASF) chairman. His name and record are also included in the Hall of Fame.

Convenor of the Hall of Fame, Ted Simmons is continually looking for nominations, whose backgrounds are assessed by a committee of five.

Oscar Crino: Former Australian International sweeper cum midfielder.

"Clubs or individuals need to supply us with nominations to keep the history of soccer in Australia alive," Simmons said.

"We need to recognise administrators, players or referees, who have contributed to the progress of soccer at a national level. This can be inside or outside Australia. Soccer is a large family of people and the Hall of Fame is our way of honoring their contributions," he said.

To nominate a person or persons or make inquiries, contact the VSF on 9682-9666.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

Match Reports page 10 & 11

ABSW Player of the Year Points

ROUND FOURTEEN

PARRAMATTA V PERTH GLORY
3 - Miller (PP)
2 - Brown (PP)
1 - Mori (PG)

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS V OLYMPIC
3 - Collina (SO)
2 - Roberts (NU)
1 - Zoricich (SO)

CANBERRA V ADELAIDE CITY
3 - Migazawa (CC)
2 - Pelosi (AC)
1 - Purdue (CC)

SYDNEY UNITED V EASTERN PRIDE
3 - Tolios (SU)
2 - Hutchinson (EP)
1 - Deur (SU)

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS V MARCONI
3 - Thompson (MS)
2 - Aceski (MS)
1 - Kiratzoglou (MS)

SOUTH MELBOURNE V KINGZ
3 - Coveny (SM)
2 - Vlahos (SM)
1 - Ngata (FK)

BRISBANE STRIKERS
BYE

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

PARRAMATTA POWER 2
PERTH GLORY 3

By Julian Murphy

An impressive second half performance by the Parramatta Power was scuppered by a late penalty to Perth's Bobby Despotovski at Parramatta Stadium. The Glory striker calmly converted an 89th minute spot kick, awarded after he had been brought down by Power skipper Alex Tobin.

The Power appeared to have secured a point, arguably deserving more, when Joe Miller deflected a sharp Joel Griffiths pass into the goal in the 69th minute.

The 3-2 victory flattered the visiting Glory even though they had the better of a first half that finished locked at a goal apiece.

The Power completely dominated the second stanza, winning numerous corners that were accurately delivered by Damien Brown before being nervously cleared by the Perth defence.

In stark contrast to the rest of the game Parramatta had spent the first half an hour chasing shadows, particularly those of Despotovski, Damien Mori and Alistair Edwards. There was no real surprise when after 34 minutes Mori became the first player of the season to score 10 goals.

The leagueís leading scorer, fresh from a four goal haul against Brisbane, received the ball from Jamie Harnwell and placed it past Power ëkeeper Andrew Crews.

Mori's goal seemed to remind Parramatta how to play football and they soon began to exert control over proceedings.

Glory defenders Harnwell, Shane Pryce and Dion Valle suddenly found themselves under pressure as a Miller-inspired Power pushed for an equaliser. It arrived shortly afterwards in the form of penalty as Perth 'keeper Jason Petkovic's shoulder impeded Griffiths in the box.

Miller stepped up to send Petkovic the wrong way, scoring the first goal in what was to become his third brace for the season.

The home side continued to run Perth ragged with both Peter Bennett and Joe Vrkic having threatening shots blocked moments into the second half.

Miller was again prominent with the pace of Joel Griffiths causing the Glory plenty of problems.

As is so often the case, Parramatta's inability to breech the Glory defence was punished when Kasey Wehrman cracked home an unstoppable long-range free kick in the 63rd minute.

Parramatta didn't allow this setback to distract them and, as was the case after Mori's opener, it didn't take long for them to reply with Griffiths feeding Miller.

Parramatta worked hard to pick up their fourth consecutive home victory and visiting coach Bernd Stange would have been happy to return to the west with a draw. Instead the Glory collected all three competition points when Tobin's arm inadvertently clipped Despotovski as he dribbled towards goal shortly before the final whistle.

In what appeared to be a dubious decision, referee Matthew Breeze had no hesitation in pointing to the spot. Despotovski picked himself up and fired home to give them all three points, and remarkable their 10th goal in just 180 minutes of football.

Perth Glory goalscorer Kasey Wehrman is held back by Parramatta Power's double goalscorer Joe Miller.

CANBERRA COSMOS 1
ADELAIDE FORCE 1

By Graham Cooke

Canberra Cosmos' tough midfielder, Andy Ravanello, may be out for a month after straining a hamstring in the 1-1 draw with Adelaide Force on Saturday.

Ravanello was in man-of-the-match form when he was forced from the field in the 36th minute. The good news for Canberra coach Tom Sermanni is that the replacement, captain Robbie Hooker, showed no ill effects from a back injury and played steadily throughout the remainder of the game.

Canberra began the match eager to end a run of four consecutive losses at Bruce Stadium, and the portents were promising in a goalless first half when they had much the better of the play.

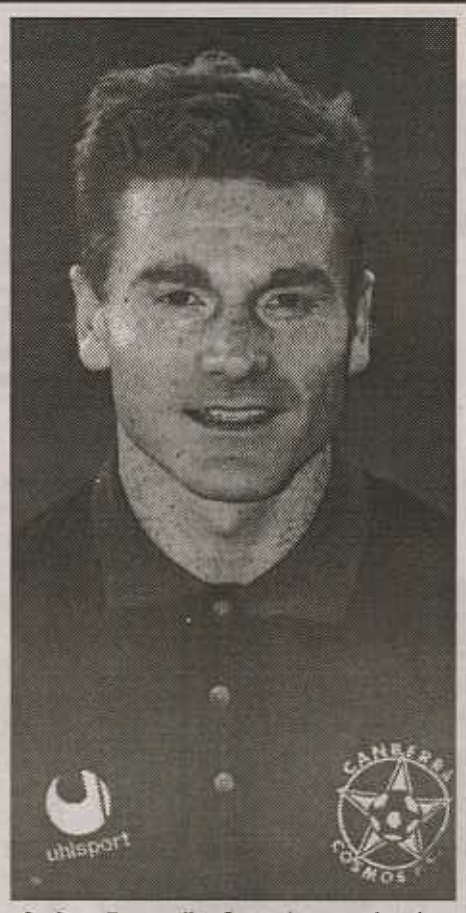
But it looked like a rerun of the same sad story when, in the 61st minute Claudio Pelosi slipped around the back of the defence to shoot Adelaide into a lead they could not have expected and hardly deserved.

Sermanni said afterwards he could see the goal coming. "We went brain dead, the intensity dropped and we conceded a goal," he said. "We have done it so many times this season."

The difference on this occasion was that instead of meekly surrendering, the Cosmos hit back, substitute Mark Hagger popping up to head past goalkeeper Adrian Cagalj with 14 minutes remaining.

In the final stages both sides could have snatched the win. Cosmos goalkeeper Angelo Konstantinou needed all his considerable reach to gather in a shot from Kosta Salapasidis and in stoppage time Canberra striker Jon Angelucci's header scraped over the crossbar.

After the disgraceful performance against the Auckland Kingz, this game will have given the Bruce Stadium fans some heart. Milton Cortes was a spectacular and entertaining factor in an incident-filled first half before fading in the second; Japanese defender Hiroshi Miyazawa was a model of consistency, and newcomer Con Anthopoulos lasted the game well, and finished strongly despite getting his first full 90-minute outing for two months.



Andrew Ravanello: Set to be out of action for up to a month after straining a hamstring.

For the Force, Pelosi was a consistent danger up front and Carl Veart a difficult player to shake off the ball. However coach Zoran Matic was critical of his teamís lackluster first half display.

"We were not concentrating, there was too much confusion and passes were going astray," he said.

"Then, when we had the game in our grasp, there was selfishness and a lack of discipline and we did not finish the job."

NEWCASTLE UNITED 0
SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1

By Greg Danvers

Sydney Olympic snatched three points off Newcastle United in the dying moments of a hard fought match on a sub-standard pitch at Marathon Stadium on Friday night.

Olympic, through skipper Ante Juric, posted a 1-0 win over the home side in front of 10,525 fans and while Marathon Stadium provides the opportunity to host many more spectators the surface is somewhat of a bug bear.

The sandy surface allowed the ball to run and players from both sides had difficulty showing their wares.

"There is no doubt that there is luck attached to when you win games in the last minute," Olympic coach Branko Culina said.

"Particularly with a shot like Ante Juric's as great as it was but it's not the first time.

"We did it last week, we did it against Marconi and we did it against Melbourne Knights so either we are a very very lucky team or a team which is showing a little bit of character.

"One or the other but I'll take the win.

"But credit to Newcastle, this is not a bad side and it is one of the most fearful trips away from home and this is the first time that I have beaten Newcastle.

"I think you will see a much better Newcastle in the second half of the season."

Juric, playing with the aid of a pain killing injection in his left heel, ventured forward in the last minute of regulation time and sweetly struck a left footer that curled into the top left corner of United's net.

For Olympic is was a matter of taking their one and only chance of the match whereas for United four clear chances and no result.

Todd McManus missed a sitter in the sixth minute with Olympic 'keeper Clint Bolton sunning himself on the sand, Mark Wilson shot went across the face of goal in the 63rd, Anthony Magnacca was agonisingly close to the right post three minutes later and Bolton earned his winner's bonus tipping a Magnacca dead ball over the bar in the 71st.

"At the end of the day we got punished for not taking our chances," a devastated and distraught United coach Lee Sterrey said.

"The boys deserved more. It's just so disappointing because the boys worked tirelessly and if you look at some of the performances, Tsekenis was outstanding at the back and I thought he played very strong against his old club and had probably his best game of the season by a mile.

"Mark Wilson was strong in midfield, left and right, and got into the box on many occasions.

"And the way we structured the game we had some very good players and played the game well.

"It's just devastating that we're not finishing it's that simple."

Ante Juric: Last minute match winner for Olympic.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 1
MARCONI STALLIONS 4

By Bert van Bedaf

With temperatures reaching 37 degrees, Soccer Australia delayed the kick-offs for both Melbourne matches until 8pm after a request from the players' union.

But it gave the Knights little respite from the attacking heat of Archie Thompson. The former Carlton striker netted twice in Marconi's 4-1 trouncing of the Knights at Sunshine last Sunday. The win lifted the Stallions to sixth place on the NSL ladder.

The Stallions adopted an eight-men defence in the first half to close down the Knights attack, while trying their own luck on the break. Their ploy did not succeed and the Stallions moved into attack in the second half, which won them the game.

The Knights set about breaking down the Marconi wall from the start, but had no answer to Marconi's second-half blitz.

"It was a team effort, but Archie (Thompson) was one our players who made the difference for us," Marconi coach Eddie Krncevic said afterwards.

"This was a crucial match for us. We dropped two points last week (2-2 with Newcastle) and I expected more of the players. They put in a big effort in the second half and we had a bit of luck as well," he said.

Knights coach Vlado Vanis acknowledged it was a bad loss, which dropped the Melbourne side to fifth-bottom.

The inclusion of Andrew Marth (captain), Lubo Lapsansky, Steve Horvat and Daniel Vasilevski, having arrived from defunct Carlton as free agents, has disrupted the Knights youthful side, which was in seventh place before the changes.

"It is worrying when you are losing after signing four quality players.

It looks strong on paper, but paper doesn't win games. Maybe, I didn't want all of the players," Vanis hinted at being "advised" to play his star draftees, while they may not be quite match fit.

The Knights created their first opportunity after 15 minutes, when Daniel Vasilevski crossed for Adrian Cervinski in the box. But the striker sliced the ball over the bar under pressure from Marconi defender Mark Babic.

Alex Kiratzoglou set up the Knights' second chance five minutes later, passing to Lubo Lapsansky, who provided Joel Porter. But his side-footed shot failed to test Marconi 'keeper David Aceski, who saved easily.

Lapsansky missed a clear chance in the 25th minute from a Cervinski cross and his powerful drive in the 33rd minute stranded on Aceski, who blocked the shot.

Porter finally broke the deadlock in the 38th minute with an emphatic left-footer from an Andy Vargas through-pass, giving the Knights a well-deserved lead at half time.

Marconi approached the second half with a more attacking frame of mind and levelled in the 51st minute, producing a reversal of fortunes.

Kris Trajanovski played a fluent one-two with Thompson. The former Carlton striker slotted home the equaliser with his second goal in his second match for the Stallions.

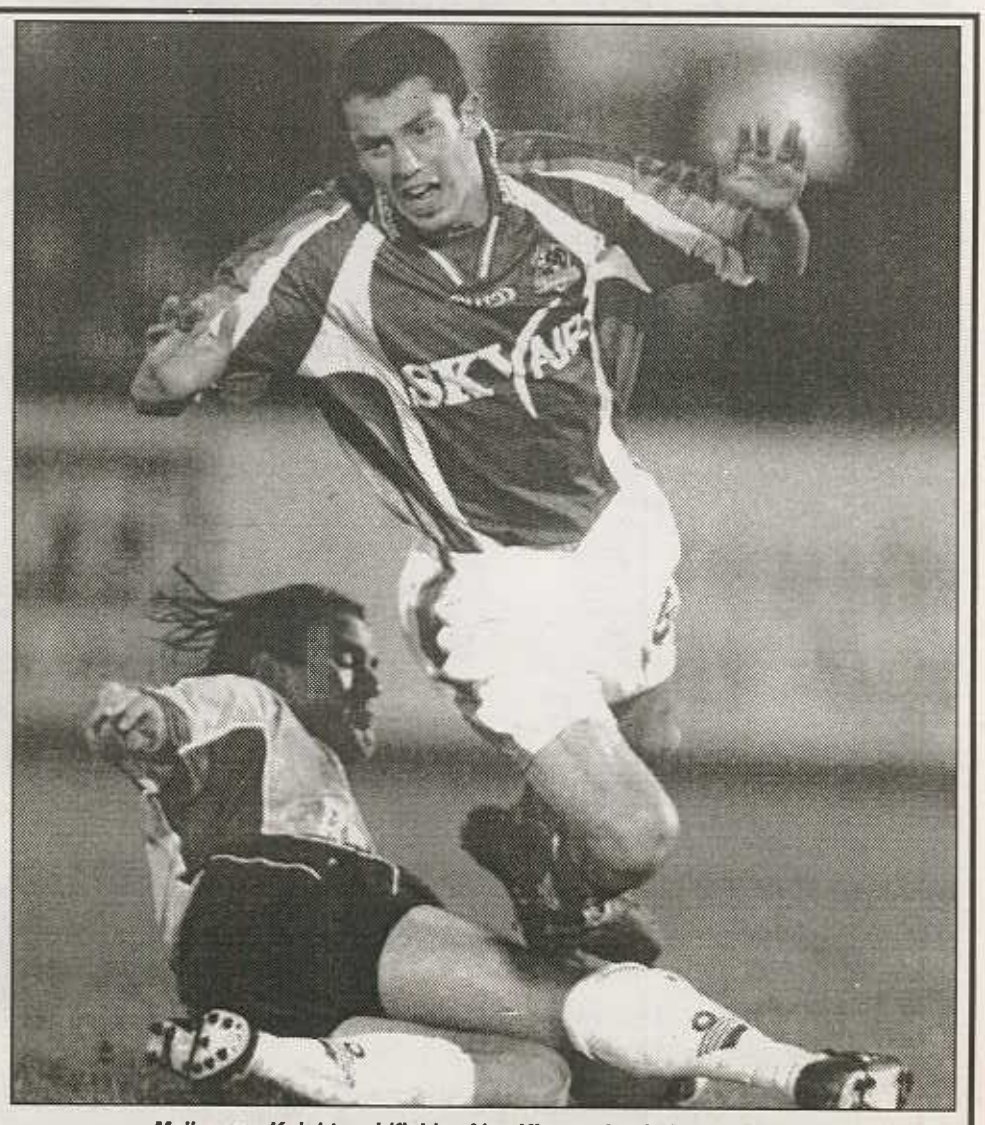
The Knights let slip their golden opportunity to equalise, when captain Marth failed to convert a penalty in the 65th minute. Dominic Longo brought down striker Adrian Cervinski and referee Eddie Lennie pointed to the spot. But Marth, lethal for his former club Carlton, had his shot blocked by an excellent Aceski.

Thompson gave Marconi the lead three minutes later and Marconi sealed the match with two more goals on the counter.

Thompson slid past four defenders before slamming the ball home into the far corner from outside the box.

Substitute Toto Da Costa tapped a one-one with Aceski just past the far post in another failed Knights' attempt to get back into the game.

Christian Care repeated Thompson's dose in similar fashion in the 72nd second minute and substitute Royce Brownlie completed the rout with a rocketing shot in the 81st minute for a 4-1 final score line.



Melbourne Knights midfielder Alex Kiratzoglou is brought down by Marconi's Christian Care.

SYDNEY UNITED 1
EASTERN PRIDE 0

By Ante Grabovac

Sydney United registered their first win in 11 starts with an unconvincing 1-0 victory over Eastern Pride at the Sydney United Sports Centre in front of 2,312 fans.

"We played much better in the last two matches and were denied points due to the woodwork or scrambling defence.

"This week the luck shone on us. We played poorly, and obtained the full points," stated Sydney United coach Alan Hunter.

At half-time Hunter replaced Nahuel Arrarte with Ante Deur. Deur scored in the 58th minute when Genc chested the ball down into his path. The Number 13 was left alone in the box and from close range, blasted the ball past a diving Pride goalkeeper, Bojo Jevdjevic. It was Deur's third goal for the season.

Following the goal, there were are number of goal mouth incidences mainly falling to the luckless Pride.

In the 59th Daniel Watkins was one on one in the box with only the United goalkeeper Steve Tolios to beat. His shot was saved by Tolios and from the resulting corner a Pride header was cleared off the line by Danny Burt.

In the 68th minute, United captain Aytek Genc was fortunately on the line and cleared a header from the Pride attack.

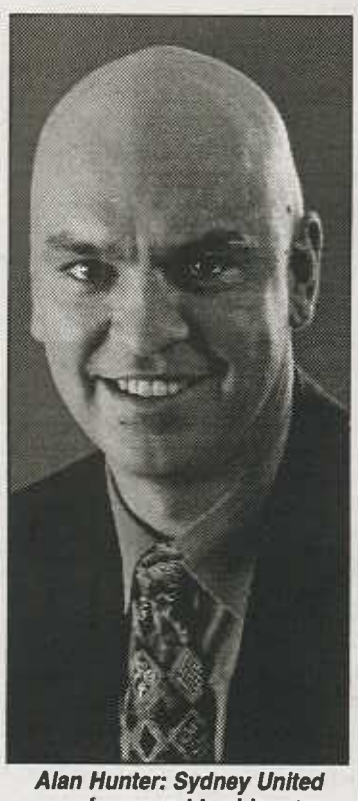
In the 77th an Arambasic shot across the goal hit the far post and rebounded back to Awaritefe whose shot was cleared off the line by a scrambling Pride defence.

In the 82nd Richard Plesa stopped a certain Pride goal by desperately clearing off the line. In the 89th Ante Deak on the by line chipped Tolios who got a hand to the ball, the ball floated and hit the far post before eventually being cleared from danger.

In the 94th Daniel Watkins header saved by diving Tolios.

All of the Bravehearts breathed a sigh of relief as they left the field as United had escaped with victory. It was only the second clean sheet of the season for United and the first ever clean sheet in the NSL for United goalkeeper Steve Tolios when playing in a full match.

The first half was an uninspiring affair. United began brightly but were contained by an enthusiastic Pride defence. The highlights came when both side hit the back of the net (Arambasic for United, Roach for Pride), only to have the goals flagged for offside.



Alan Hunter: Sydney United coach agrees his side were lucky to come away with the three points.

SOUTH MELBOURNE 3
FOOTBALL KINGZ 0

By Alan Clark

South Melbourne notched up its first ever win against New Zealand's Football Kingz in a comprehensive 3-0 victory in oppressively hot conditions at Bob Jane Stadium on Sunday evening.

The game, originally scheduled to commence at 5:00pm, was rescheduled first for 6:00pm when it was known that Melbourne was to experience a day with temperatures exceeding 40C, then further delayed to 8:00pm at the behest of the players' union.

Kingz had started the more brightly, but it was through a controversial penalty that South took the lead. Vas Kalogerakos was adjudged to have been brought down in the penalty-area by Kingz goalkeeper Simon Eaddy just before the midpoint of the first half.

"I think we were a bit lucky (with the penalty)," said South coach Mickey Petersen after the game. "There was a bit of experience by Vas to leave his foot there and get clipped, but in any case his pace caused problems all night, so it was worthy of a goal or a set up for a goal."

Kalogerakos had broken a Kingz offside trap after a cleverly weighted David Clarkson ball cleared the Kingz back line. Paul Trimboli netted from the spot.

Kingz' complaints about the penalty award had some justification, as only minutes before, referee Simon Micalef had waved away claims for a penalty at the other end when Dennis Ibrahim seemed to have been fouled to a similar degree.

"Kingz were stiff (in not getting the penalty)", said Petersen. "Kingz had the better of the early exchanges for the first fifteen or twenty minutes. It took us a while to settle in."

Kingz assistant coach Shane Rufer rued those early misses. "We could have scored three or four in the first half. Wynton Rufer missed a couple of chances that he normally buries every day at training."

Speaking after the Kingz penalty-claim denied, and the South one awarded, Rufer simply said: "In football, the referee's decision is final. He's whistled how he's whistled, and that's how the game is played."

If South's first goal was given, rather than earnt, the second was due reward for a sparkling South move.

Fausto De Amicis had joined in a South foray up the left, exchanging a pass with Zjelko Susa at the edge of the penalty-area before storming to the bye-line. His cut-back was deadly. Kalogerakos had the simplest of touches to finish from inside the six-yard box.

With barely a third of the game elapsed, the home crowd waited in anticipation of further delights.

But South had probably done enough not to need to extend themselves, and seemed content to play conservatively from then on.

The brightest moment of the second-half was the long-awaited introduction of new-signing Simon Colosimo whose introduction was warmly welcomed by the South support even if it was delayed until the 72nd minute. His first touches were simple passes just getting the feel of the game.

But scarcely two minutes later, Colosimo was to play a much more ambitious pass which found Vaughan Coveny in space at the half-way line.

Coveny raced up the right, then direct on goal before unleashing an unstoppable shot past Eaddy for the third.

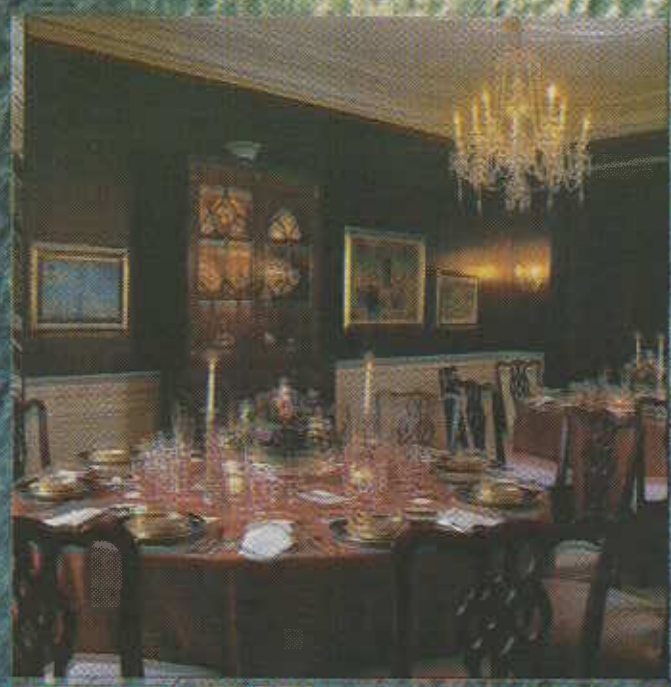
Colosimo and Coveny were to repeat this double act a few more times without the same outcome before the match had concluded, surely something to attract the worried attention of other NSL coaches.

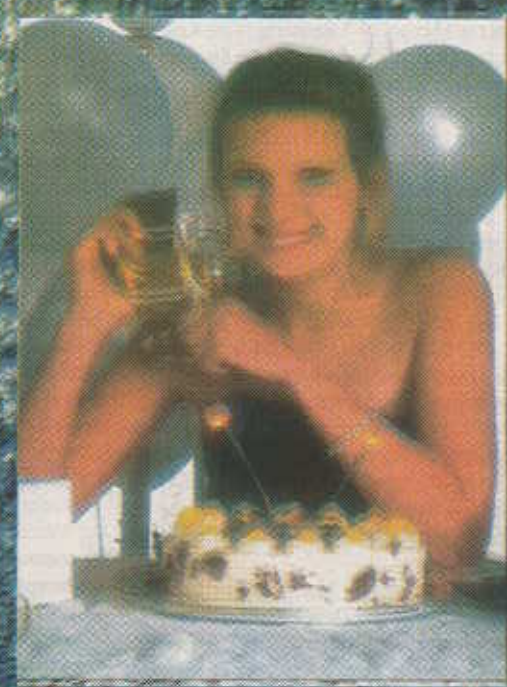
Although Petersen was delighted with the win and the lead-stretching three points that came with it, he was concerned at his side's approach. "I didn't think we got out of second gear at all. I didn't think our tempo was good at all. We don't plan to play at half-pace, but the weather was a bit sapping, and you have to take that into consideration."

South Melbourne striker John Anastasiadis (left) gets away from a Football Kingz defender.

"It's half-past midnight in New Zealand, it's thirty-something degrees.

It's quite demanding situation (for us)," said Rufer by way of post-match explanation. "South had pace up front which was a killer."





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Red Hot Marconi to host luckless Brisbane

By John Economos

Marconi on Saturday night will be looking to consolidate their position in the 'Top Six' when they clash with John Kosmina's severely depleted Brisbane Strikers at the Marconi Stadium.

The Strikers most tragically had already lost for the rest of the season their experienced and classy defender, Glenn Gwynne.

Compounding Kosmina's woes is the recent loss of veteran striker Paul Foster who along with Gwynne will sit out the remainder of the season with a serious knee injury.

If that wasn't enough to cause Kosmina chaotic headaches, a mysterious stomach ailment has kept striker Peter Grierson out of action for the past six weeks.

Last week-end the Brisbane side had a well received bye following a tough opening 13 weeks of the season, and their last start ending in a 7-2 loss to the Perth Glory.

Kosmina is understood to now be chasing the Perth Glory's talented striker Peter Buljan as a replacement for Foster.

Transfer negotiations are yet to be resolved with Perth.

However Buljan's failure to cement a first team spot by displacing Damian Mori, Bobby Despotovski or Alistair Edwards, could see the young former striker from Canberra filling the void in Kosmina's starting XI.

Marconi

Meanwhile Marconi's luck has been vastly different to the Queenslanders.

In their last four games Marconi has been able to collar in 10 points, including most impressive away wins against the Perth Glory and the Melbourne Knights.

Recently signed striker, Archie Thompson, last Sunday proved heroic for Marconi when he scored two second half goals to turn the 'ship' around for the Sydney team.

The mobile flank-striker scored his first, six minutes after the break that 'balanced the books' with the Melbourne Knights.

In the 68th, Thompson nailed in his second in spectacular style as he glided past three Knight defenders before hitting the target.

The former Carlton striker has now scored three very valuable goals in his first two matches for his new Club, to rapidly begin yielding dividends on Marconi's investment in him.

Marconi's diminutive midfielder, Christian Care, plus powerful new striker from Queensland, Royce Brownlie, both followed up with a goal each to completely unsaddle the Knights 1-4 and grab all three vital League points.

With two recent impressive away-wins, Marconi has edged itself into the 'Top Five' bracket on the League ladder and must be rated favourites for Saturday night's clash against John Kosmina's the Brisbane Strikers.

With last week's departure for Switzerland of robust midfielder Darren McDonald, coach Eddie Krncevic shifted tough as teak centre-back Buddy Farah into the midfield to fill the void.

Eddie Krncevic: Marconi's sceptic coach.

Archie Thompson: Marconi's mobile striker.

Fernando Rech: Brisbane's brilliant Brazilian striker.

John Kosmina: Brisbane's head-coach.

STOP PRESS

FROM NEW GUINEA
Johnny Warren

UNITECH FC 0

WOLLONGONG 6
Chipperfield 6,
Reid 10,
Lucas 45 & 86
Petrovski 55
Smith 88
Send off: Stanton.

Wollongong has now qualified for the Semi-Finals of the **Oceania World Club Championships.**

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Dominic Longo, Marconi's captain and central marker.

POLICE EJECT JUNIORS FROM SAWA AGM

By Richard Kreider

Perth Glory may be doing everything right in the west at National Soccer League level, but not so the local internal facet of the code where the Soccer Administration of Western Australia, the states governing body, applied the heavy arm of the law to remove representatives of the Junior Soccer Association of WA from their December Annual General Meeting.

Bill Oddy, the JSA president and publicity board member, Mike Anderton said they there simply as observers, and refused to go believing they were protected by the constitution, after being repeatedly asked to leave.

"Who was I going to ask to have them removed, the RSPCA?" said SAWA Chairman Paul Afkos in defence of the harsh action. "The crux of the matter is they are not an affiliate. This is a members meeting, not a public meeting where there is a standing invitation to members only to attend. It is regrettable, but for the safety of the members, I thought it was appropriate."

Afkos said Oddy told him that he had the authority from Soccer Australia (SA) to attend the meeting but the SAWA chairman later rang SA chairman Basil Scarsella for confirmation upon which Scarsella informed him that he hadn't given them no such instruction.

However, a letter to SAWA from Soccer Australia chairman Basil Scarsella, dated 6 December 2000, "expressed concern about the decision of the SAWA Board to defer the JSAWA admission as a member of SAWA particularly in circumstances where SAWA has not given any indication when the Board will meet again to consider the application for membership by the JSA."

Further correspondence from the SA chairman dated 28 December 2000, said "the JSA is directly affiliated to Soccer Australia and will continue to be provided by Soccer Australia with the full benefits of an affiliated member irrespective of its membership of SAWA, therefore it seems to me it is entirely appropriate for the JSA to be re-admitted as a member of SAWA."

"Obviously, the Board felt that they were going to make statements they didn't want people to hear," Oddy said.

"It is sad that the game comes to a situation where a Board, who is supposed to be open and transparent has no invitation to its AGM," said Oddy.

"Nobody from other interested parties attended because they weren't even told. You must ask yourself, why would somebody not want anyone to ask any questions? What have they got to hide? Has money disappeared, who knows?" said the JSA leader.

"When the police rolled up and threatened to put us in the paddy wagons, we were gob smacked," said Anderton. "It was clear that they were caught off balance with our presence and they obviously didn't want to conduct the AGM with us present," he said.

"It is like a police state when you start having that sort of action taken by people who you are supposed to be co-existing with."

The heavy tactics, namely four armed officers from the local police station, was initiated by the SAWA board since the JSA had yet to be reaffiliated with the states governing body after removing themselves as members last March, but have since reapplied on numerous occasions.

"They have even got our $10,000 cheque which is yet to be banked," said Anderton.

"We have attempted for five months to get the JSA back into the fold but they have declined," replied Afkos.

"We had to go and seek assistance from Soccer Australia who directed them to become members of the State Federation (SAWA)," he said.

Paul Afkos: SAWA Chairman.

The Junior body removed themselves from SAWA because of disillusionment with SAWA's running of the local code.

"Boardroom decisions were made over the telephone, nothing was brought to the meeting table and deals were done outside the Board which is due process," said Oddy. As well as that, the Juniors were upset that the existing PSF owed SAWA monies to the tune of $22,000 to $33,000 and it appeared that SAWA didn't seem to be making moves in retrieving that money.

So the JSA said, enough is enough. It (SAWA) seems to be a gathering of people who produce nothing and do nothing. It has no policies no goals no steps no nothing. Plus, the continual bickering between the PSF and WAASSA keeps going on and on.

"The game hasn't moved. Other states have similar problems but at least their game has moved forward. You can go away from WA for twenty years and nothing would have changed," Oddy said.

"The only way the game can move forward, is to remove everything that's been in place over the last twenty years, and that includes the identities and egos surrounding it."

Oddy also denied there was any steps of a merger between the JSA and the Professional Soccer Federation (PSF) despite Afkos stating he has written proof.

"Definitely not," said Oddy. "The discussions we had were that the two generals managers of the JSA and the PSF spoke about a joint venture on the likes of insurances and fixture books, things that our own associations do, but there would be a better bargaining power if we worked together.

The PSF wanted to take us over but our clubs and a number of PSF clubs have in fact advised us to stay well clear of each other. We have never entered into any merger discussions, and nor would we.

If anything happened it would be well down the track and by the time we hope the Fielding Report would have been implemented and the new organisation running in this state," he said.

The Fielding Report was produced for the Minister for Sport and Recreation, Mr Norman Moore, in November 1999, to review the administrative structure of the code in Western Australia.

Their recommendations included SAWA be abolished and replaced with a newly incorporated association to control and manage all aspects of WA soccer.

The State Government has since appointed an interim chairman, Stirling mayor Tony Vellalonga, to administer the creation of a new body, called Soccer Western Australia. Applications for commissioners closed three weeks ago.

"If the intention is that Mr Vallelonga oversee only the implementation and not the development, of the new Soccer Western Australia, then it would appear that he has a difficult task ahead of him," said Oddy in a letter to his junior clubs.

"We reiterate that it is of great concern that, to date, no consultation has taken place with regard to this restructure. Not only has the JSA been excluded from discussion, so too have the vast majority of stakeholders at all other levels." Oddy ended.

SOCCER WOMAN – AUSTRALIA CUP

BY JANENE MAR

MATILDAS HANG FOR OPENING WIN

Match One

AUSTRALIA 2
(Kim Revell 47+m, Cheryl Salisbury 49m)
FRANCE 1
(Hoda Lattaf 66m)
at Coffs Harbour International Sports Stadium
Crowd: 5,118

The Matildas were forced to fight hard for their 2-1 win against France last Thursday night in Coffs Harbour, getting them off to a good start in the Australia Cup three-test series.

Their two goal advantage was in danger of being whittled away when the French responded with a goal midway through the second half, and thereafter continued to pressure the Australian defence. But the spirited Matildas held on in what was a bruising affair to record an exciting win to the delight of the 5,118-strong crowd.

Striker April Mann almost pulled out a dream goal to celebrate her debut for Australia just four minutes in, her thumping drive from the edge of the box well saved by the keeper. Two minutes later, France's Peggy Provost had her long range strike kicked off the line by midfielder Bryony Duus.

An even tussle ensued for the remainder of the half until stoppage time when Australia came well alive.

Noticing the French keeper way out off her line, Sharon Black struck first time on the turn from 26 metres and chipped the keeper, only to hit the left post.

But the ball remained in play and eventually made its way to Kim Revell who neatly lobbed the ball into goal from the left edge of the 18-yard. The timing was perfect, just before half-time.

Australia doubled their lead four minutes into the second half, Revell providing a well-floated free-kick into the box which was touched on with a glancing header. Cheryl Salisbury, ghosting in at the far post, timed her volley to perfection for a sensational goal, reclaiming outright her mantle of Australia's top scorer of all time with a total of twenty-five.

As things became more heated between the two sides, France capitalised on a freekick in the 66th minute, Hoda Lattaf finishing the chance with a solid header from nine metres at the far post. Boosted by the goal, the French hovered in the attacking third for the next ten minutes.

Midfielder Taryn Rockall came in off the bench to also notch up her first cap for Australia.

"I'm happy with the result," said Interim Coach Adrian Santrac. "It was a very good first hitout. The girls really dug deep and did extremely well."

Australia: *Nichols, Tann-Darby, Alagich, Salisbury, Bartlett, Forman, Duus (Rockall 77), Cooper, Black, Revell, Mann (Ferguson 82).*

France: *Lagache, Sykora (M'Barek 67), Provost, Riera, Diacre, Soubeyrand, Mugneret-Beghe, Blouin, Lattaf (Roujas 81), Herbert (Rouquet 67), Bompastor.*

FRANCE STAY ALIVE WITH LATE EQUALISER

Match Two

AUSTRALIA 1
(Kim Revell 80m)
FRANCE 1
(Stephanie Mugneret-Beghe 88m)
at Oakes Oval, Lismore
Crowd: 2,350

The Australia Cup champion will be decided in the third and final match this Wednesday after France kept their chances alive against the Matildas with a late equaliser last Sunday evening in Lismore, snatching a 1-1 draw.

The Matildas looked likely to lift the trophy after just the two games after taking the lead with ten minutes remaining today, but instead the Gold Coast clash will prove the deciding encounter.

Overall the game was not pretty to watch, however the second half proved more even, the home side getting nearer to goal, whilst France maintained a steady pressure.

Finally the Matildas broke the deadlock in the 80th minute, Kim Revell scoring her second for the tournament with a solid header from 14 metres at the far post to finish a great Sharon Black early cross from deep on the left. Revell was relieved, having hit wide from three similar chances.

France suddenly also found their shooting range, two minutes later Hoda Lattaf's drive bravely blocked at close range by Aussie keeper Claire Nichols out off her line. Then in the 88th minute, a good cutback from the endline was smashed low into goal with a sensational first-time drive on the burst by midfielder Stephanie Mugneret-Beghe to even the score.

France had a golden opportunity to snatch victory in stoppage time, Sandrine Soubeyrand clutching her head in her hands as she watched her shot with only the keeper to beat sail well over the target.

"To concede the goal at that stage was disappointing, but to put things in perspective, when you compare the preparation of the two teams and consider our short time together as a group, our results have been first class," said Interim Coach Adrian Santrac. "Today we didn't play well on the ball, but we worked hard to retain shape, our discipline, and tactical awareness."

Australia: *Nichols, Tann-Darby, Alagich, Salisbury, Bartlett, Forman, Duus (Rockall 75), Cooper (Wainwright 68), Black (Golebiowski 83), Revell, Mann (Ferguson 64).*

France: *Marty, Viguier (Sykora 46), Provost, Riera, Diacre, Soubeyrand, Mugneret-Beghe, Brandy (Blouin 29), Dos Santos (Bompastor 46), Lattaf (Herbert 81), Roujas (Rouquet 75).*

PROGRESSIVE POINTS LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
AUS	2	1	1	-	3	2	1	4
FRA	2	-	1	1	2	3	-1	1

Last Match: 3rd Australia Cup : Australia v France
Wed 17 January 7.00pm Carrara Sporting Complex
Nerang-Broadbeach Road, Carrara QLD 4211

NSW Premier League

NSW Premier League

ROUND 9

BLACKTOWN LUCKY

Canterbury Marrickville	1
Blacktown City	3

By Don O'Regan

The re-built Canterbury Marrickville under new coach Jim Ziras had the upper hand in most areas of the field against Blacktown City Demons at Henson Park last Friday night except in the most important part – in front of goal.

The effervescent midfielder Talcevski, with the skilful pairing of Kotsopoulos and Amegashie up front, were a constant thorn in the side of the away team but when they did manage to penetrate the Demons' oufield they had trouble overcoming John Crawley in the City goal. Their short, sharp interplay ensured that the Blacktown defence had to be constantly vigilant to maintain the Demons' current unbeaten run of 28 consecutive matches.

The game as a whole was an open, free flowing and highly entertaining affair with plenty of crisp counter attacking to keep both sets of supporters on the edges of their seats for most for the ninety minutes. In the 17th minute City were able to exploit the inexperience of the Canterbury defence when Paul Yates rose above his markers to firmly head home Paul Dee's cross for the opening goal but almost immediately the Berries went close to equalizing.

Yates went from hero to villain when he under hit a back pass and the precocious Amegashie darted in to pick up the gift but his shot was unable to beat Crawley who sped from his line to block the attempt.

The normally steadfast Demon defence surprisingly gifted Canterbury another chance in the 24th minute and this time City were made to pay dearly for their profligacy. Jason Connolly played a soft ball straight to the lurking Kotsopoulos who danced away to the left of the area before coolly placing the ball in the opposite corner of the goal. The Berries confidence soared after this equaliser although they still struggled to get the decisive touch in front of goal. Just after the half-hour mark Kotsopoulos was again free in front of goal but the ever-alert Crawley was again up to the task, spreading himself at just the right time to block the shot.

The Berries were probably ahead on points, if not goals, up until the 56th minute when, once again, they fell to the same first-half move that saw them go behind. A cleverly worked City free-kick from wide on the right which had Steve Riches working as the foil, was eventually curled in to the far post by Dee where Yates, yet again, rose him to head the centre past Jose Bello Amigo.

The entertainment never let up with both Amegashie and Molachino firing over the bar for Canterbury and Jimmy Aschner, making his first start for the Demons, narrowly heading wide in the 76th minute. Blacktown delivered the killer blow in the 87th minute but not before an element of luck went their way. Canterbury's Kyriazopoulos played a short pass to ex-Demon D'Allessandro who drove the ball fiercely towards the City goal. The shot rebounded off the post to Riches who backed the ball away to safety and, as it happened, right to the feet of his colleague Robert Angievski who was unmarked and deep in the Canterbury half. Angievski raced towards goal and as he reached the area, spectacularly thumped the ball in the net, allowing his coach and team-mates to breathe a little easier for the remaining minutes of what was an engrossing encounter.

WRAP-UP

BLACKTOWN PULL AWAY

Blacktown continued their unbeaten run to 28 games with a 3-1 win over a gallant Canterbury-Marrickville side on Friday night.

Paul Yates scored the Demons first two goals, both times rising at the back post from a free kick to beat the Berries goalkeeper Jose Bello-Amigo. The Berries replied through a smartly taken Aheleas Kotsopoulos strike but the match was settled when substitute Robert Angievski nailed Blacktown's third with just 3 minutes left.

A 75th minute goal by Central Coast striker Clint Smith secured all three points for the Coasties in their home game against the Penrith Panthers on Saturday night.

After losing two games on the trot the Coasties were desperate for a win against the struggling Panthers, but struggled to break down a defence that had conceded 22 goals in their previous eight games.

Given their injury problems and form it was a spirited performance by Penrith, although once again they came away empty-handed.

Five goals, two penalties, one red card and a rugby tackle were the highlights of St George's defiant 3-2 victory against Bonnyrigg at the Serbian Centre on Saturday night.

Robbie Gomez intercepted a Bill Petrovski back-pass to give the Bonnyrigg an early lead but an accurate spot kick b Emmanuel Papageorgiou squared the ledger on the half-hour mark.

David Reid beat Stacy Alogdellis to restore the home side's supremacy but another penalty, on this occasion awarded against Fernando Greco for tackling a St George player, saw Michael Kladis send Greco the wrong way from the spot.

Petrovski made amends for his earlier error by scoring the winner after dribbling past Greco shortly after the break.

The Leichhardt Tigers were comfortable winners over the Sutherland Sharks on Sunday night at Lambert Park, with three classy strikes proving the difference between the two outfits.

Sam La Rocca got the home side off to an ideal start after he netted in the 34th minute, with goals from Mark Hoenselaars and Jason Lal in the second-half confirming Leichhardt's superiority.

Parramatta kept within four points of league leaders Blacktown City with a 3-1 home victory over the Belconnen Blue Devils.

Ben Delicata's cross on 15 minutes was volleyed home by Adam Anderson, and Delicata then set-up Danial Cummins for a carbon-copy goal on 34 minutes. Scott Manson pulled a goal back for the Blue Devils right on the stroke of half time, but on 61 minutes Anderson and Cummins linked superbly, Cummins heading home his second goal of the game to secure the three points for the Eagles.

• RESULTS •
ROUND 9

Blacktown City (Yates 17m, 56m, Angievski 87m)	3	**Cant. M'ville** (Kotsopoulos 24m)	1
Central Coast (Smith 75m)	1	**Panthers**	0
Leichhardt (La Rocca 34m, Hoenselaars 55m, Lal 68m)	3	**Sutherland Sharks**	0
Parramatta (Anderson 15m, Cummins 34m, 61m)	3	**Belconnen Blue** (Manson 43m)	1
St George (Papageorgiou 30m, Kladis 45m, Petrovski 50m)	3	**Bonnyrigg** (Gomez 9m, Reid 41m)	2

• TOP SCORERS •
AFTER ROUND 9

Player	Club	Goals
Steve Lazzari	BELCONNEN	10
Darren Iocca	BLACKTOWN CITY	8
Javier Mancino	BONNYRIGG	6
Danial Cummins	PARRAMATTA EAGLES	6
Matthew Borg	LEICHHARDT	5

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE LADDER
(AFTER ROUND 9)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blacktown City	9	7	2	0	19	6	23
Parramatta	9	6	1	2	20	14	19
St George	9	5	1	3	16	15	16
Bonnyrigg	9	4	3	2	23	12	15
Leichhardt	9	4	1	4	20	16	13
Canterbury	9	4	1	4	14	15	13
Belconnen	9	4	0	5	16	16	12
Central Coast	9	4	0	5	10	10	12
Sutherland	9	0	3	6	6	22	3
Penrith	9	0	2	7	5	23	2

For further information see: www.nswpremierleague.com

SUPER SAINTS DOWN EAGLES

Bonnyrigg	2
St George	3

By Binesh Mudaliar

St George recorded their third win in four games to climb into third position on the ladder following an incident-packed 2-3 win against Bonnyrigg away from home.

Saints defender George Zabetakis was stretchered off in the opening minutes of the game and a disastrous back-pass by his replacement, Bill Petrovski, was intercepted byRobbie Gomez for the opening goal of the night in the ninth minute.

St George Captain Michael Kladis led from the front to ensure his team did not collapse under an avalanche of goals as so often happens to visiting teams at the Serbian Centre.

On the half-hour mark, Bonnyrigg skipper Javier Mancino was awarded a red card for handling the ball on the line and Emmanuel Papageorgiou converted the resultant spot kick.

David Reid restored Bonnyrigg's advantage in the 41st minute after running onto a long ball from midfield and beating Stacy Alogdellis in a one-on-one situation.

However, four minutes later, St George was level again after Bonnyrigg goalkeeper Fernando Greco's bizarre decision to rugby tackle an opponent inside the box. Kladis stepped up to take the penalty and sent Greco the wrong way to restore scoreboard equilibrium.

Five minutes after the break, Bill Petrovski made up for his earlier error by dribbling around Greco to give the Saints the lead for the first-time in the match.

Bonnyrigg spent the next forty minutes searching for the equaliser but minus Mancino along with a below par Johnny Ghisso and Devrim Huseyin, the Saints held on for a season-making win.

Teams Bonnyrigg: Greco, Utjesenovic, Dragas, Devrimol, Mancino, Harding, Ghisso, Gomez, Hawrysiuk, Reid (Huseyin 57m), Warburton (Van Bentum 70m)

St George: Alogdellis, Maglis, Boliantitis, Markopoulos, Kladis, Verrender (Bacek 65m), Zabetakis (Petrovski 5m), Petratos, Alexiou (Polimenakos 72m), Papageorgiou, Sevares.

NSW Premier League

www.nswpremierleague.com

ROUND 10

FRIDAY 19 JANUARY
C'bury M'ville v St George Saints — HENSON PARK
Under 19s: 6.00pm — First Grade: 8.00pm

SATURDAY 20 JANUARY
Belconnen B. Devils v Penrith — WEST BEL. SPORTS GR
Under 19s: 4.30pm — First Grade: 6.30pm

SUNDAY 21 JANUARY
Bonnyrigg v Central Coast — SERBIAN CENTRE
Leichhardt v Blacktown Demons — LAMBERT PARK
Parramatta v Sutherland — MELITA STADIUM
Under 19s: 4.30pm — First Grade: 6.30pm

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KNIGHTS GIVE DA COSTA TOTO SUPPORT

Melbourne Knights coach Vlado Vanis signed forward Toto Da Costa at the start of this season after seeing him on video. Vanis continues to be impressed with his visa player, contracted for two seasons. Victorian editor Bert van Bedaf profiles the Angolan-born star.

Antonio Santos Maria Da Costa listens to the nickname Toto.

It has a ring about it, like Ronaldo or Romario. Although not quite of the same calibre as the Brazilian superstars, Da Costa has brought his own brand of magic to Knights stadium, where a critical home crowd is warming to his twists and turns, his thrusts into the box and, especially, to his goal scoring ability.

The unassuming 27-year-old professional footballer has come a long way to follow a career that includes a decade near the top in Portugal and the Netherlands. But Australia might just become his home, once his wife and two children will have joined him in Melbourne.

"Australia is a fine country. I like it here," he said. "But it would be better if my family was here with me. It is hard on my own, without my family," Da Costa offered a glimpse of introspection.

The Knights striker is due to return from a brief break in Holland — sorting out official paperwork — and hopefully his family will be able to join him shortly.

His life began in Luanda, the capital of war-torn Angola, which he left as a 15-year-old in 1988 to seek fame and fortune in Portugal.

A former Portuguese colony, West African Angola declared itself independent in 1975 and has been plagued by foreign incursions and several civil wars since.

Da Costa was "discovered" at an indoor soccer tournament in Portugal's cosmopolitan capital at the start of the 1990s.

Signed by Bobby Robson, then coach of first division club Sporting Lisbon, Da Costa joined a squad of 36 players, hoping the break into the senior team.

Competition was so severe his chances proved slim, so he was loaned to neighboring second division club Estoril, where he played from 1992 to 1995 before joining Dutch second division club RBC Roosendaal on a two-year contract. In 1997 he moved to local rival Eindhoven until the end of last year.

Following his departure at Eindhoven, Da Costa was unsettled for several months, playing for lower division clubs in Belgium and back in the Netherlands until midway last year when Vanis plucked him from obscurity and put him in Australia's national league.

Toto Da Costa: Angolan-born star enjoying life with the Knights.

Da Costa has scored four goals so far and contributes substantially on the forward line. He still needs to adjust his style of play to the directer and more physical demands of Australian football. In Europe he was used to more tactical battles and more time on the ball.

"Teams in Europe play a more tactical and skillful game. Here the game is more physical and I will need to adjust," Da Costa observed before flying to Holland on his break.

Naturally, the "adjustment" is taking time. It has not always been without problems.

When the Knights went through their mini-crisis after a decent start, Vanis called on his "senior" players to step up and accept their responsibilities.

It wasn't only Adrian Cervinski or Ransford Banini who were told to take charge. Da Costa also came in for criticism.

"From a player with his reputation and experience, I expect much more," a terse Vanis commented at the time.

Three months into the NSL season, Da Costa is gradually proving his worth.

With the return of Steve Horvat, Andrew Marth (Knights captain once again) and dynamic midfielder Lubo Lapsansky from Carlton and the addition of Daniel Vasilevski, also ex-Carlton, Da Costa can expect to be made a lot busier than earlier in the season.

Vanis has the luxury of applying different formations, from 4-4-2 or 3-4-3 to 3-5-2, with Horvat as sweeper and Da Costa more forward on the left or central and no longer wasting attacking energy chasing balls in midfield. Marth and Lapsansky are set to take the central reins.

Also, with Cervinski, Joel Porter and Vasilevski available, Da Costa will be enjoying more forward support as well as facing stronger competition, driving him to better performances.

"Toto is not yet used to Australian soccer, but when he is he can give us 20 to 30 per cent more," Vanis assessed Da Costa's considerable talent and abilities.

"The game is more physical here and he will need to get used to it. He is getting better and better. In the second part of the season, he'll be more dangerous. He's already getting more in the box and so far he's scored four goals for us.

"We'll be able to get the ball more often to him now. He's dangerous on the ball. He's an excellent runner and his first touch is good. He's the type of player that can do a lot of damage with the ball," Vanis said.

Dutch coaches or former players, who've known Da Costa gave the Angolan ace a similar report.

Bram Braam, RBC coach during Da Costa's stay, said, "He's two-legged, able to control the ball and shoot with both legs. He's very athletic and goal focused. He's a great player."

Stan Valckx, who was at Sporting when Da Costa arrived, helped his protègè to get his stint in Holland. Valckx played at first division club PSV Eindhoven, when Da Costa joined RBC.

"I saw him train with us at Sporting and I immediately realised he was a good footballer. I could see he was an exciting striker with a lot of talent. Bobby Robson liked him, but there were so many talented players in our squad and little need for strikers in a defensive league that Da Costa had trouble making the senior team," Valckx said.

Da Costa agreed. "I was part of the squad, but there were 36 players.

I'd made the youth team and was hoping to break through. Robson said he liked me and had confidence in my style of play, but eventually I was loaned to Estoril," he said.

Da Costa travelled to PSV at own expense to consult Valckx in a possible move to a Dutch club.

"He wanted to play football in Holland. He got a trial at RBC and the club asked my opinion about him. I told them that at RBC Da Costa would have the opportunity to grow," the former Dutch international said.

His move to Holland came as a godsend for Da Costa, who thrived in the low lands. "Da Costa: a sensation at RBC", a Dutch headline described him, after he scored his fourth goal in four matches.

Now Da Costa has launched himself on a new path in a new country. Like Banini, who made Australia and the Knights his home, having come from Africa's Ghana as a youth player, Da Costa has his heart set on giving his family a new future.

"I want to do well in Australia and for the Melbourne Knights and with my family here things would be very good," Da Costa expressed his dreams and ambitions.

WORLD

RIVALDO PIPS ROMARIO AS WORLD TOP SCORER

Rivaldo edged fellow Brazilian Romario for the title of the world's top international scorer in 2000, the IFFHS soccer statistics group said.

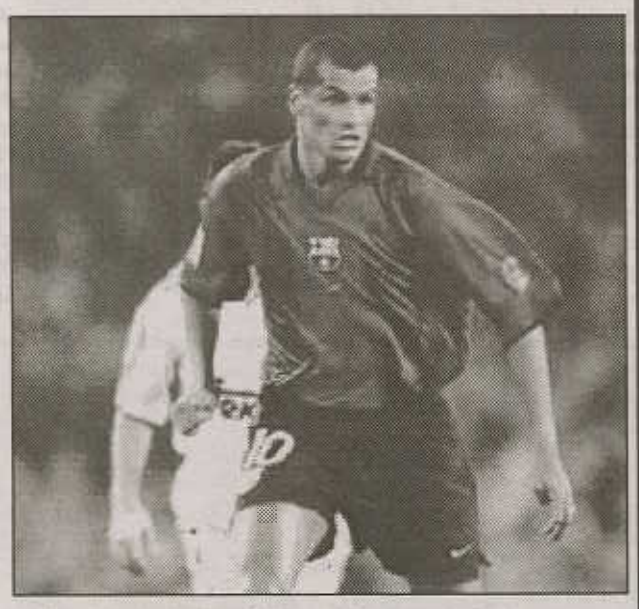
Its annual awards in Germany also named Carlos Bianchi of Boca Juniors as club coach of the year and a third Brazilian striker, Mario Jardel, as domestic club top scorer for his last season with FC Porto.

Rivaldo and Romario both scored 21 goals in representative matches and international club competitions combined. But the Barcelona player pipped the Vasco da Gama veteran, under the group's rules for world top scorer, by virtue of having scored one more goal for Brazil.

Iran and Hertha Berlin striker Ali Daei was third with 20.

Jardel's 38 goals for Porto in the 1999-2000 season before his move to Galatasaray secured him the top spot in top-flight domestic club games, one ahead of fellow Brazilian Eduardo Esidio's 37 for champions Universitario in the Peruvian league.

Esidio's achievement was all the more remarkable as he was tested positive for HIV two years ago.



Rivaldo: World's top international scorer in 2000, according to IFFHS soccer statistics group.

Hamzah Idris scored 33 goals for Al-Ittihad Jeddah in the Saudi League to finish third in the ranking.

A poll of soccer experts voted Boca's Bianchi club trainer of the year, with Hector Cuper of Valencia second and Vicente del Bosque of Real Madrid third, beating last year's winner Alex Ferguson of Manchester United into fourth place.

Real were top club of 2000 in the IFFHS ranking, ahead of Istanbul's Galatasaray and Boca Juniors from Buenos Aires.

France's Roger Lemerre was voted top national coach of the year, beating into second Humberto Coelho, who took Portugal to narrow defeat by eventual champions France in the European championship semifinals before heading abroad to train Morocco.

Argentina's Marcelo Bielsa was third.

Fabien Barthez of Manchester United and France was voted goalkeeper of the year, ahead of Oliver Kahn of Bayern Munich and Germany and third-placed Francesco Toldo of Fiorentina and Italy.

Referee of the year was the ever-recognisable bald Italian Pierluigi Collina, followed by Swede Andreas Frisk and Markus Merk of Germany.

Fabien Barthez: Goalkeeper of the Year.

ERIKSSON AT 7-1 TO LEAVE ENGLAND JOB THIS YEAR

Sven Goran Eriksson is quoted at 7-1 by English bookmakers William Hill to part company with England before the end of this year.

Hills are offering odds of 3-1 that England's new coach will depart in 2002, 8-1 during 2003, 2-1 favourite for 2004, 8-1 in 2005 and 9-4 in 2006 or later.

Hills make David Beckham the 4-11 favourite to be England captain for the next World Cup qualifier against Finland in March. Tony Adams and Sol Campbell are second favourites at 4-1.

Sven Goran Eriksson: Odds of 7-1 that he will leave England job in 2001.

KLUIVERT WANTS TO PLAY IN ENGLAND - ONE DAY

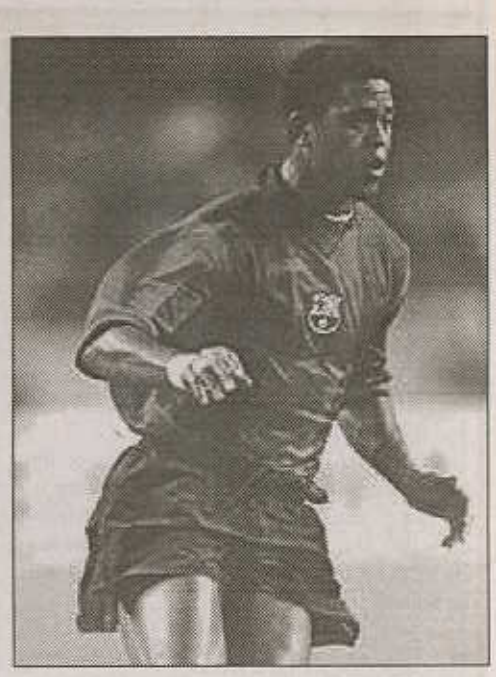
Barcelona's Dutch striker Patrick Kluivert said last week he would like to play for an English club before his career is over.

"I've always wanted to play in England. One day, for sure, I will play in England," he said on his personal website.

But he ruled out any immediate move to join his former team-mate at Barcelona and Ajax, Jari Litmanen, the Finnish international who joined Liverpool.

"The question is when. It won't be just yet. My contract has another year to run after this and my agent and Barcelona are still talking about a new (one)," said the 24-year-old.

"Nothing has been settled yet, but if everything comes alright I think I'll sign a new contract," he added.



Patrick Kluivert: Staying at Barcelona – for now.

CRYSTAL PALACE LOOKS AT GREAT WALL OF CHINA

First Division Crystal Palace has agreed to pay 2.8 million pounds for two Chinese defenders and is negotiating for a third, China's Dalian Shide club said last week.

"The deal should be signed within the next two weeks," Dalian's vice-general manager Lin Lefeng told Reuters.

Lin said Palace would sign China internationals Sun Jihai – who had a stint at Palace before returning to Dalian – and Li Ming.

In what Dalian said was the biggest soccer deal so far in China, the pair will join fellow China international Fan Zhiyi at Crystal Palace.

Sun Jihai: returning to Crystal Palace?

Palace was also negotiating the transfer of Zhang Enhua, now on loan to Grimsby Town, also of the First Division, Lin said.

Zhang's loan to Grimsby ends in April and he could move to join his compatriots in a Crystal Palace defence British tabloids have already dubbed the "Great Wall of China".

Fan and Sun were the first Chinese to play for an English club when they joined Crystal Palace in 1998, making the club a favourite with Chinese fans.

WISE TO STAY AT CHELSEA

Chelsea captain Dennis Wise says he has been persuaded to stay at the premier league club.

The 34-year-old midfielder asked to leave at the weekend after being dropped on New Year's Day by head coach Claudio Ranieri but said he had been won round by the response of club officials, fans and even his mum.

"I am staying – they all got to me," he told The Sun newspaper.

"(Chairman Ken) Bates, (chief executive) Colin Hutchison and (team mate) Gianfranco (Zola) all told me how important I am to the club and I understand that.

"Even my mum was upset I might be leaving and said I can't."

Dennis Wise: staying at Chelsea

EGYPTIAN SETS WORLD RECORD WITH 151 CAPS

Hossam Hassan of Egypt became the most capped soccer player of all time when he made his 151st international appearance in a 3-1 friendly win against Zambia.

"It's a great achievement, for which I'm happy because it is set by an Egyptian and Arab player rather than by Hossam Hassan," the 34-year-old striker told Reuters.

The previous record of 150 was set at Euro 2000 by Germany's Lothar Matthaeus, who has since retired from the international scene.

"I always feel under pressure to improve my performance," added Hassan, the scorer of more than 50 international goals. He failed to score on Tuesday but tested the Zambian goalkeeper and also set up Egypt's third goal.

"The figure in itself is not important. I must deserve it and remain

influential on the ground. What matters is quality rather than quantity," said Hassan, who plays his club football for Cairo club Zamalek.

"I love soccer very much and train very well. Every year I feel I'm better technically and physically despite the fact that the older the player, the weaker his performance."

Hossam Hassan: Most capped soccer player of all time.

Asked how long he could keep the record, Hassan said: "This depends totally on ambition and determination. Thank God, I possess these qualities."

The match signalled the start of a hectic month for Egypt, who face an African Nations Cup qualifier at home to neighbours Libya on January 14.

They are then due to play China and Iran in a tournament in Tehran from January 17- 19 and host North Korea in a friendly in Cairo on January 23.

They also have a World Cup qualifier against Morocco on January 28.

Hassan is expected to feature in almost all the matches, having maintained his consistent form since fighting his way back into the Egyptian side three years ago.

Egypt's national team manager Mahmoud al-Gohary said Hassan had set the world record because of his dedication and great love of soccer — and still had further to go.

"He has a very quiet social life and his thinking is focused only on soccer," Gohary told Reuters. "He's very serious in training, very sincere at matches."

The coach said that reaching the 2002 World Cup finals would be a strong incentive for Hassan to continue.

"If we reach the World Cup finals, Hossam will get a 'high injection of vitamins' for his performance to continue.

"You will see him as a new-born. Failing in this will deeply affect him."

The 20 most capped players of all time, according to FIFA's Century Club are as follows. In all 54 men have now made 100 international appearances or more for their country.

Caps	Name	Country	Career Span
151	Hossam Hassan	Egypt	1985-continues
150	Lothar Matthaeus	Germany	1980-2000
149	Claudio Suarez	Mexico	1992-continues
143	Thomas Ravelli	Sweden	1981-1997
140	Majed Abdullah	Saudi Arabia	1978-1994
140	Mohamed Al-Deayea	Saudi Arabia	1990-continues
135	Cobi Jones	United States	1992-continues
128	Marcelo Balboa	United States	1988-continues
127	M. Al-Khilaiwi	Saudi Arabia	1992-continues
127	Peter Schmeichel	Denmark	1987-continues
126	Andoni Zubizarreta	Spain	1985-1998
125	Gheorghe Hagi	Romania	1983-2000
125	Peter Shilton	England	1970-1990
124	Jorge Campos	Mexico	1991-continues
123	Masamai Ihara	Japan	1988-1999
122	Ramon Ramirez	Mexico	1991-continues
121	Bum-Kun Cha	South Korea	1972-1986
119	Pat Jennings	N. Ireland	1964-1986
117	Heinz Hermann	Switzerland	1978-1991
116	Roland Nilsson	Sweden	1986-continues

Players still active outside Top 20

114	Hong Myung-Bo	South Korea	1990-continues
114	Paolo Maldini	Italy	1988-continues
112	Ibrahim Hassan	Egypt	1988-continues
110	Carmel Busuttil	Malta	1982-continues
106	Eric Wynalda	United States	1990-continues
104	Jeff Agoos	United States	1988-continues
100	Cafu	Brazil	1990-continues

LARSON READY TO REAP REWARDS OF GOLDEN NEW ERA

For the next few weeks, defenders in Scotland can sleep a little easier in their beds. Henrik Larsson is on holiday.

The Scottish Premier League's winter break has been the only thing capable of stopping the man who is Europe's top scorer this season.

Larsson and his Celtic team mates flew to the United States last weekend for a training camp in the Florida sunshine, but the bad news for defenders is that when the prolific Swede returns he has his sights set on a golden new era for his club and for himself.

Larsson has netted 32 goals this season -- 28 in the league, wich makes him favourite for the prestigious Golden Boot award -- and he is desperate to continue that form when the Scottish championship resumes on January 31 so that he can lead Celtic to only their second title in 13 years.

Such success would almost certainly see the 29-year-old striker rewarded with a lucrative contract extension keeping him at Celtic for the rest of his career. His current contract runs until 2002.

Larsson's four goals in the 6-0 rout of Kilmarnock two weeks saw him pass the century landmark for Celtic, taking his total to 101 goals in just 138 games since he joined from Feyenoord in July 1997.

That maintained Celtic's nine-point lead over Hibernian as the championship took its winter break.

But it also gave the football public time to take stock of the remarkable comeback Larsson had made only a year after his career had seemed over.

The Swede broke his left leg in two places in October 1999 in a UEFA Cup match in Lyon. The injury was so bad that doctors feared that surgery would not be able to repair the damage.

Larsson did not kick a ball for seven months, yet his determination and courage saw him battle back to appear for Sweden at Euro 2000 even though he had played only 45 minutes of football in Celtic's final game of last season.

He even scored in Euro 2000, taking the ball round Italy goalkeeper Francesco Toldo with a typically composed finish.

He carried on scoring for Celtic, curling in a left-foot shot against Dundee United in a 2-1 win on the opening weekend of the season in July, and has not stopped since. In August, he struck twice in the 6-2 rout of Rangers, including a goal where he put the ball through the legs of Dutch defender Bert Konterman and then lobbed over goalkeeper Stefan Klos from 20 metres.

Henrik Larsson: An incredible 32 goals so far this season.

And yet Larsson remains modest when it comes to discussing his status as one of Europe's best goalscorers.

"I don't really think of myself as a striker, that's not the main thing on my mind," he said after the match with Kilmarnock.

"Sure if we are winning 4-0 then I would like to get another goal and I will go for it. But the most important thing is that Celtic get three points.

"I didn't know too much about my goal record (at Celtic) but when you pass 100 goals it is a great feeling."

Larsson's strike rate has brought 12-million-pound inquiries from Arsenal and Manchester United, which makes Celtic's purchase of Larsson for just 650,000 pounds from Feyenoord even more astute.

Larsson scored a modest 16 league goals in helping Celtic to win the title in 1997-98, his first season, and 29 in 1998-99. But this campaign has exceeded expectations.

"I was more of a playmaker in Holland," said Larsson. "I still see that as my role but I get better service now at Celtic than I did at Feyenoord and my team mates, like Chris Sutton who has set up a lot of goals for me, must take the credit.

"But if you ask 'Am I a better goalscorer now?' the answer is, yes."

Larsson is the idol of the 60,000 fans who fill Celtic Park for every home game and the club superstore's biggest-selling items are shirts with Larsson's name and number seven on the back and plastic masks of the Swede with his once-trademark dreadlocks and his tongue stuck out -- his way of celebrating a goal.

Larsson shaved off the famous dreadlocks in October but unlike Samson the move has not robbed him of his powers.

The prestigious Golden Boot, awarded to the top marksman in Europe, is Larsson's for the taking.

A new grading system means Larsson receives three points for every league goal — Scottish teams were previously restricted to just one point per goal.

His closest challenger, Mario Jardel, has netted only 18 for Galatasaray in the Turkish league, while Thierry Henry has scored 13 for Arsenal in England.

FERGUSON FIRES BROADSIDE AT PLAYERS' AGENTS

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson has fired a broadside at players' agents as the English champions move to renegotiate several long term contracts with players.

United have either begun, or are about to begin, renegotiating contracts with England midfielder David Beckham, Welsh winger Ryan Giggs, striker Andy Cole and Dutch international defender Jaap Stam.

Last week several newspaper reports suggested Beckham's agents were asking for a salary of more than 70,000 pounds a week.

But Ferguson, speaking on the club's official website, said the agents were only interested in themselves and not the players.

"It has all become just a huge ego trip for agents," he said.

"All the figures about what players are wanting is all coming from the agents. It is more important for them to get huge salaries for their players than it is for the players themselves.

Sir Alex Ferguson: Agents are only interested in themselves.

"Agents demand this kind of money and then they can go around to their other clients saying 'I got this and that for so-and-so.'

"All agents are is a voice for the player. As a club we know what we are prepared to give a player before we get into discussions. Agents asking for such and such a figure is rubbish."

Both Beckham and Giggs emphasised their desire to remain at the club earlier on.

KOVIS TAKES THE HELM AT PAS IOANNINA

Greek first division club PAS Ioannina named Nikos Kovis as their new coach on the weekend, less than 24 hours after accepting the resignation of his predecessor, George Paraschos.

"I think we can achieve our aim, which is to stay in the first division," the experienced former Paniliakos manager told the club's website.

Paraschos quit last Friday, accusing the club of failing to inform him that midfielder Yourkos Seitaridis had been transferred to Panathinaikos hours ahead of PAS's match with Panionios.

Kovis's team, 12th in the 16-team division, faced bottom club OFI Crete on Sunday.

ALEX SET TO RETURN TO FRANCE TO CLEAR HIS NAME

Brazilian striker Alex, one of the players at the centre of a storm in France over the alleged use of fake passports, was quoted as saying last weekend he would return to his club St Etienne to clear his name.

Earlier last week, Alex failed to attend a hearing held by the disciplinary commission of the French National Soccer League (LNF).

The hearing ruled he would remain suspended until he was available to face the committee.

Former St Etienne team mate Maxim Levitsky, also suspected of having a fake passport, attended the hearing as ordered and gave evidence. He was interviewed by police after the meeting. Alex, currently in the central Brazilian state of Goias, was quoted in the Sao Paulo sports daily A Gazeta Esportiva, as saying he would return to France after the weekend.

He said he did not appear at the disciplinary hearing January 9 because the LNF had not sent his lawyers the necessary paperwork and he had "personal problems" to deal with.

"I did not return to France because my mother became ill," he was quoted as saying.

"But everyone there likes me a lot. I was wanted by PSG (Paris St Germain) and Lyon and I plan on continuing in French football."

Both Alex and Levitsky face long suspensions -- and possibly criminal charges -- if it is found they have used illegal passports.

Lorenzo Amoruso: Says the standard of Scottish soccer the main reason for him wanting to leave Rangers.

AMORUSO FIRES PARTING SHOT AT SCOTTISH GAME

Italian defender Lorenzo Amoruso, who hopes to join English premier league club West Ham United this month, said the standard of Scottish soccer was the main reason for him wanting to leave Rangers.

"I just want the opportunity to become a better player and to play at a much higher level than the Scottish Premier League," he told the Daily Record tabloid on last weekend.

"It could be the premiership, Serie A or any other league in Europe. It really doesn't matter to me."

Amoruso, who arrived in Scotland in 1997 from Fiorentina, will fly to Florida with Rangers on Monday for a training camp but hopes the transfer will be sealed by the time he returns.

"It will be good for me to join a new club as I need new motivations, new team mates and a new manager," he said.

"I have no preferences on which club to sign for, although contrary to what has been said I wasn't holding out for a move back to Italy."

BERGER OFF TO AMERICA FOR INJURY CHECK-UP

Liverpool's Czech Republic international Patrik Berger was due to fly to the United States last weekend to check on his progress as he bids to recover from a long-term knee injury.

Berger was operated on by Dr Richard Steadman in Colorado after he badly twisted his knee in Liverpool's 4-3 premier league defeat by Leeds United on November 4.

The midfielder is now returning to the States for a check-up with the surgeon.

"I'm not going there for a holiday," Berger said on his personal website.

"I'll be travelling with one of our physios, Mark Browse, and with (team mate) Jamie Redknapp, who was also operated on over there by Dr Steadman.

"I don't feel any pain and my leg is strong. It's just that my injured knee is one centimetre smaller in circumference than my good one. I'll have to work on that."

Berger added: "I'll have my normal treatment with Mark on Monday morning in the hospital gym, and on Tuesday I have an appointment with Dr Steadman.

He'll assess the state of my knee and will be able to tell me if I can start running next week."

Berger said if he gets the go-ahead to do some jogging he might be ready to make a first- team comeback for Liverpool by the end of February.

The Prague-born player, who has scored 18 goals in 40 appearances for the Czech Republic, joined Liverpool after starring for his national team during Euro 96.

Patrik Berger: Due to fly to the United States for injury check-up.

Jamie Redknapp: Traveling with Berger and physio Mark Browse.

Jose Luis Chilavert: refused to be a substitute for Strasbourg.

CHILAVERT IN CONFLICT WITH STRASBOURG

Controversial Paraguay goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert is at loggerheads with French First Division strugglers Strasbourg after refusing to be a replacement for last Saturday's match at Bastia.

Strasbourg coach Yvon Pouliquen named Christophe Eggimann as his starting goalkeeper with Chilavert on the bench but the Paraguayan said he would rather be fined than be a substitute.

"You can't imagine the impact on his image in South America if photos were published of him sitting on the bench for the bottom club in France,"

Chilavert's agent Omar da Fonseca told local newspaper L'Alsace.

"He doesn't want photos of him on the bench transmitted all over South America — where he is a star."

Goal-scoring goalkeeper Chilavert joined Strasbourg last year from Argentine side Velez Sarsfield but has struggled to make an impact in a poor side, conceding nine goals in six first-team appearances before the winter break.

Da Fonseca refused to comment on Chilavert's future in France.

"We'll take a look at this at the start of next week but there are no offers on the table at the moment," he said.

Nicolas Bonis, who plays for the Strasbourg reserve team, was named to replace Chilavert on the bench for the Bastia game.

WORLD

RUSSO WRITES

By Joe Russo

You didn't have to be a genius to work out that Sven Goran Eriksson wouldn't last the season at Lazio. This column on several occasions predicted he would go and that it was only a matter of time.

A 1-2 scoreline at home against Napoli was the final straw. Napoli had struggled so far and Lazio are current Italian champions.

Club President, Sergio Cragnotti, finally saw the obvious. 'Blind Freddie' saw it as well. How could a coach be totally committed to a club when he already had a five-year contract in his pocket to coach England?

However, what is surprising is that Eriksson's assistant, Roberto Mancini, has packed his bags as well. The former Bologna, Sampdoria and Lazio player was being groomed, many had thought, to be a future Lazio coach.

Instead Dino Zoff has now embarked on his third stint as Lazio coach. The former brilliant goalkeeper has covered other roles at Lazio, including that of President, but as a coach, he would surely rate as possibly the most boring ever.

Zoff also coached at Juventus and had the reigns of the national team for about two years.

He resigned after Euro 2000 and Italy's bitter defeat to France in the final. Many would tell you that Italy got to the final in spite of having Zoff as coach. In other words, his contribution was negligible.

As a temporary measure it is understandable that Cragnotti secured a club favourite as coach but surely it could only be until someone better is appointed.

★★★★

More surprising than former national coach Zoff returning to coach a Serie A team is the return of Arrigo Sacchi, who has been appointed at Parma. He takes over from Alberto Malesani after Parma lost 2-0 at home to Reggina.

Sacchi was probably Italy's most controversial coach in recent memory. From the time he took over the Azzurri team in 1991 until he quit (before he was pushed) in 1996, he never fielded the same starting eleven on two consecutive occasions.

His career has already seen him in charge of Parma when they were a Third Division team but his real career highlight was when he coached AC Milan.

Many associate the name Sacchi with that most successful AC Milan side but in his four years in charge, he only won one league title (Scudetto). His second stint at AC Milan, for most of the 1996/97 season, was a total disaster.

The real successful coach at Milan was Fabio Capello in his first stint there - four titles in five years. Capello took over after Sacchi and it is he who should receive most of the credit, if you are to give credit to any coach.

Let's face it, Gullit, van Basten, Baresi, Donadoni, Tassotti, Rijkaard, Papin, Massaro, Albertini, Simone, Maldini, Costacurta, Lentini, Savicevic and Boban were just some of the players of that fabulous era at Milan.

Sacchi does have on his resume the 1994 World Cup final lost on a penalty shoot-out but little credit for that achievement actually belongs to him. 1994 was Robbie Baggio's World Cup and his heroics in games, such as against Nigeria, kept Italy in business.

The most memorable achievements by Sacchi at that World Cup were, his fallout with Baggio (remember his incredible replacement of Baggio against Norway) and his efforts to make the brilliant attacker, Giuseppe Signori, play as a defender. Signori naturally refused and left the squad after the semi-final win and refused to play again for the national team.

Sacchi's performance on the field should best be remembered at Euro 96 - Italy was a total failure and Baggio watched it all from his lounge at home. It was then that Sacchi realised his days were numbered.

His powerful ally at the Italian Football Federation, then President Antonio Matarrese, was quickly losing power and could hardly save his own job let alone that of Sacchi's.

Diplomatically Sacchi resigned and returned to AC Milan, then moved onto Atletico Madrid but both stints were disasters! Unfortunately not much will change at Parma because Sacchi is not the man to turn their season around.

SERIE A

JUVENTUS 1 BOLOGNA 0

David Trezeguet headed home his seventh goal of the season from a cross from French international Zinedine Zidane.

Five of Trezeguet's seven goals have been headers. Bologna's Julio Cruz missed a late penalty. Juventus closed the gap on leaders AS Roma to six points.

INTER MILAN 1 PARMA 1

A Marco Di Vaio header in the 32nd minute promised to give Arrigo Sacchi a winning return to the Parma bench after a 14-year absence, but Christian Vieri's second goal of an injury-plagued season in the 69th earned Inter a draw.

LECCE 3 VICENZA 1

Lecce's Davor Vugrinec scored twice in four minutes to take his season's tally to six.

Vugrinec struck a well-taken free kick in the 32nd minute and followed up from the penalty spot four minutes later. Argentine Aldo Osorio hit Lecce's third in the 68th minute before teenager Marco Comotto rounded out the scoring for Vicenza.

REGGINA 1 ATALANTA 0

Davide Dionigi scored his third goal in two games for in-form Reggina.

His strike in the 22nd minute gave Reggina their third consecutive victory. Fading Atalanta have now lost three league matches in a row.

Lazio's striker Hernan Crespo (left) shoots and scores ahead of Udinese's Stefano Sottili.

UDINESE 3 LAZIO 4

Lazio scored their third straight win on the road. An own goal by Marco Zamboni gave them the lead before Udinese defender Valerio Bertotto was sent off in the 35th minute for handball.

Hernan Crespo slotted home the spot kick and when Marcelo Salas made it 3-0 the game appeared over.

But Udinese hit back three times after the break through Stefano Fiore, Massimo Margiotta and Argentine Roberto Carlos Sosa. In the end, Crespo's second strike in the 50th minute was enough to give Dino Zoff a winning return as coach. Udinese have now lost six of their last seven matches.

BRESCIA 1 PERUGIA 0

Argentine midfielder Andres Yllana's goal in the 20th minute gave Brescia their first home win this season.

Perugia had two sent off just before the end of the first half. With the loss, Perugia saw their three-game win streak come to an end. This was Brescia's second win in 14 league matches.

AS ROMA 1 BARI 1

Giuseppe Mazzarelli's free kick midway through the second half gave Bari an unexpected lead before Roma captain Francesco Totti equalised from the penalty spot six minutes later.

Roma's lead is now down to six points over Juventus.

VERONA 2 NAPOLI 1

Brazilian striker Adailton scored one minute from time to complete Verona's come-from-behind win.

Claudio Bellucci had given Napoli the lead with a right-footed strike in the 78th minute before Adrian Mutu equalised six minutes later.

FIORENTINA 4 AC MILAN 0

Rui Costa capped a fine performance with his fourth goal of the season three minutes from time as Fiorentina won at home.

Nuno Gomes opened the scoring after 15 minutes. Midfielder Sandro Cois scored on a rare strike two minutes into the second half and forward Enrico Chiesa connected for his eighth of the season, slotting home a fine ball from Rui Costa. Chiesa has now scored in six consecutive league matches.

Juventus' striker Filippo Inzaghi (left) is fouled by Bologna midfielder Giovanni Placentini.

WORLD

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

ARSENAL 1 CHELSEA 1

Robert Pires cut through two tackles to fire Arsenal ahead after just three minutes and they had the best of the rest of the first half, with Chelsea 'keeper Carlo Cudicini making three good saves.

Arsenal 'keeper David Seaman, returning to action after a three-month injury absence, saved well with his feet from Gustavo Poyet but was badly at fault for Chelsea's equaliser, punching a Dennis Wise corner towards his own goal and John Terry completing the job.

ASTON VILLA 0 LIVERPOOL 3

Danny Murphy took the plaudits with two goals and a brilliant all-round midfield performance as Liverpool swamped toothless Villa.

Murphy scored the 24th minute opener and a slick Liverpool move set up Steven Gerrard to smash home the second soon after.

Emile Heskey shot wide early in the second half but made up for it by crossing for Murphy to knock in his second.

Finnish striker Jari Litmanen made his first start for Liverpool with Robbie Fowler not even meriting a place on the bench.

BRADFORD 0 MAN UNITED 3

A glaring error by former Manchester United goalkeeper Gary Walsh enabled the champions to snatch victory.

After Bradford had defended manfully Walsh, under no pressure, came out to kick clear in the 72nd minute but managed to miss the ball entirely leaving Teddy Sheringham to score the easiest goal of his career.

It was harsh on Bradford who had looked on course for a point but Ryan Giggs cut through to blast in a second minutes later and Luke Chadwick completed the win.

Jaap Stam played his first game since August with United, who were also boosted by a sub's appearance from Andy Cole.

EVERTON 0 TOTTENHAM 0

Kevin Campbell had a header brilliantly saved by Neil Sullivan and then shot against a post as Everton dominated throughout.

But the goal would not come and their dire run, which has now produced just two points (and one goal) from a possible 21, continues.

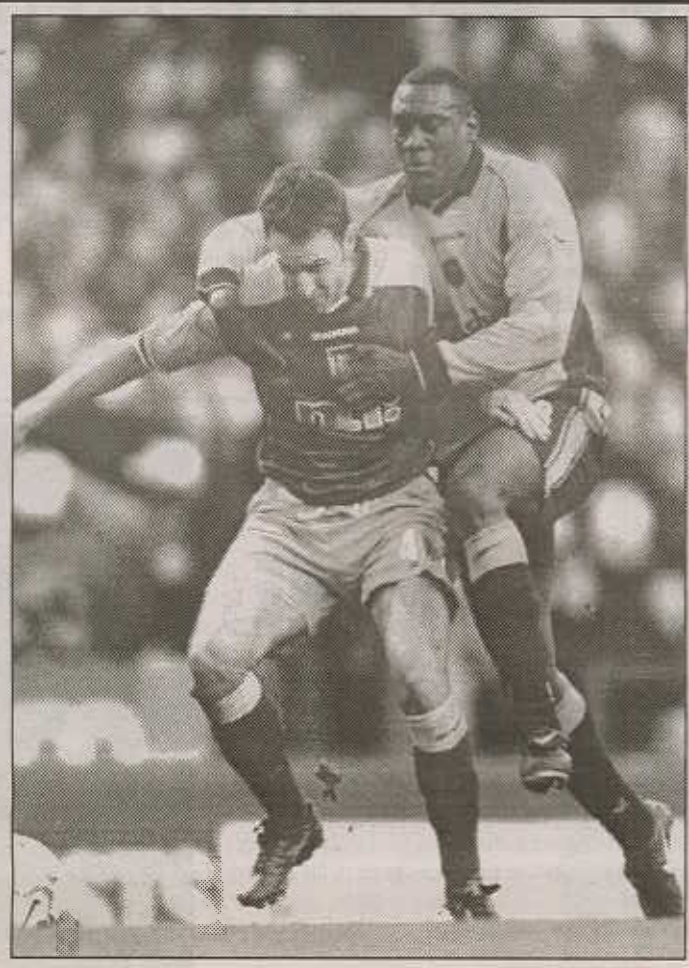
Tottenham, without an away win since April, hardly managed a shot.

MAN CITY 0 LEEDS UNITED 4

City's seventh home defeat of the season leaves them in real trouble and they can have no complaints as Leeds posted their first away league win since August.

Eirik Bakke slotted Leeds ahead after half an hour and a deflected Lee Bowyer shot made it 2-0 in the 80th.

Robbie Keane added two in the last minute to complete a great day for Leeds.



Aston Villa's Gareth Southgate is held onto by Liverpool's Emile Heskey during their match at Villa Park. Liverpool won 0-3.

M'BORO 4 DERBY 0

An incredible victory for goal-shy Boro which lifted them out of the relegation zone.

Boro went ahead just before the break with an Alen Boksic penalty after Darryl Powell pushed Christian Karembeu.

Ugo Ehiogu headed the second after an hour, Boksic added his second and also hit the bar before Hamilton Ricard made it four with a last-minute penalty.

N'CASTLE UTD 3 COVENTRY 1

Gary Speed headed Newcastle ahead after four minutes and Shola Ameobi scored his first goal for the club after a great cross by Keiron Dyer in the 58th minute.

Dyer did it all himself to make it 3-0 before a Stephen Glass own goal put Coventry on the scoresheet.

S'HAMPTON 0 CHARLTON 0

Saints dominated possession but lacked the cutting edge of late while Charlton's minds may have been on this week's FA Cup replay with Dagenham and Redbridge.

WEST HAM 0 SUNDERLAND 2

Sunderland moved up to second with an accomplished performance.

Slovak defender Stanislav Varga headed them into the lead against the run of play after 22 minutes.

With new England manager Sven Goran Eriksson watching, West Ham continued to dominate possession but rarely looked like breaking through a well-organised Sunderland rearguard.

And the visitors' growing confidence was rewarded by Don Hutchison's 30-metre free kick in the 68th minute.

IPSWICH 2 LEICESTER 0

Ipswich Town took a while to warm up but eventually ran out deserved winners in front of new England manager Sven Goran Eriksson.

Leicester had been forced on the defensive for most of the game and with 10 minutes remaining Marcus Stewart headed Ipswich ahead, scoring for the sixth successive game and taking his league tally to 14.

Jamie Scowcroft headed the second in the last minute to secure the win that moved Ipswich back to fourth.

Leeds United's Lee Bowyer (right) shoots and scores his sides second goal in their 0-4 demolition of Manchester City.

MURPHY'S LAW

By Julian Murphy

If your football club is going through a rough trot or worse still, you happen to be a Bradford City fan, you can still rely on a bit of behind the scenes scandal to cheer you up.

There is always something happening somewhere in the football world and last week there was more going on than usual.

As most people know, Brazil take their football pretty damn seriously and the country's congress has launched an inquiry into how the national football team could only finish as runner-up at the last World Cup. As you would.

Linked to this inquiry is an investigation looking at the relationship between the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) and clothing manufacturer Nike. There is a great deal of concern about how much influence Nike has over the CBF and in particular what part, if any, they played in an unfit Ronaldo starting in the World Cup final.

Poor Ronaldo's personal deal with Nike has also come under scrutiny and the owner of the worldís most famous buggered knee looked stressed as he politely answered questions a few days ago.

Another of the games biggest names who is never far from the spotlight is Diego Maradona. Farce and theatre follow the great player everywhere he goes, not allowing him time away from the headlines for long. Italian authorities were on hand when Maradona arrived in the country last week, threatening him with arrest for unpaid taxes and subsequent interest from his playing days with Napoli.

True to form, Maradona's response to the accusations was rather different to Ronaldoís controlled display. He grinned to the media and snapped words to the effect of, "No way, not me. Napoli's problem, check the contract."

Further down the world football hierarchy is English first division club Gillingham who are under fire for supposed financial irregularities. The chairman of the ambitious Kent-based club, which narrowly avoided extinction six years ago, has strongly denied any wrongdoing. Gillingham's desire to emulate Wimbledon of the 1980ís may be dashed if the allegations about illegal player payments proves to be true.

Propping up the English Football League is troubled Carlisle United. Barring a miracle, they will be playing in the Conference next season and a 47-year old bar man provided an unwanted distraction last week. The struggling club had been courting potential buyers for some time and thought they had finally found their man. Instead of being the BMW-driving businessman he claimed to be, he was actually a crappy Vauxhall-driving charlatan.

Many football followers feel that all the back room, under-hand financial dealings that take place in the game detract from what is important — a group of people kicking a ball around. They believe that the focus should be on what takes place on the field; eleven men trying to outwit and outmuscle the opposition.

I have to disagree. It mightnít always be the best thing for the game but it can be extremely fascinating for the punter. Give me a sensational off-field scandal involving a superstar or a troubled club rather than the recent FA Cup bore-athon between Bradford City and Middlesborough any day.

★ ★ ★ ★

Teflon Terry Venables appears to be just what Middlesborough need in their fight to retain their Premier League status, doesn't he?

The 4-0 belting of Derby on the weekend has seen Boro move up to 15th position and they should avoid the embarrassment of relegation.

There is a long way to go and it could still all go pear-shaped for the club from England's north east. You watch — if Boro do go down, Bryan Robson will cop the vitriol and, with a cheeky wink, Teflon will probably stroll into the England job after Sven-Goran Eriksson has landed flat on his face. Then you will have to add Boro to the Venables list from recent years that includes Portsmouth, Crystal Palace and Australia.

ERIKSSON CONFIDENT OF 2002 QUALIFICATION

Sven Goran Eriksson started his job as England's new coach believing his new team would qualify for the 2002 World Cup finals.

Eriksson, meeting the press at the new Soho headquarters of the English Football Association, said: "I believe we shall qualify for 2002."

"You have to think positive. After the first two games, losing to Germany and drawing with Finland, the position is not perfect, but there are still six games to play so of course there is a big possibility of qualifying."

The Swede got a brief taste of the bumpy ride he can expect from the media, notorious for their haranguing of England's managers, when he was asked how he would deal with those who are unhappy about his appointment as England's first foreign coach.

"I am aware of it but it is something I can't do anything about," said Eriksson. "I am a Swede and that's it. I was offered the job and here I am.

"If we play good football and get good results then I don't think people will talk about that anymore.

"But if the results are bad, they will try to hang me — but even if I was English I would be hanged with bad results."

Eriksson was originally due to start as England coach on July 1 but has taken control now after resigning from Italian Serie A club Lazio.

The road will be rough however his first real test will come in less than three months time.

"I think we have about 10 weeks before the real game against Finland and I hope to see a lot of games.

"I'm also going to meet the managers, of course, I think that's very important."

"The Spain game is also important but the must-win games are Finland and Albania."

England face Spain in a friendly at Villa Park on February 28 before playing Finland and Albania in crucial World Cup qualifying matches in March.

Sven Goran Eriksson: New England coach.

Peter Schmeichel: Staying in Portugal.

SCHMEICHEL TO STAY ON AT LISBON

Sporting's Denmark goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel ended speculation about his future by saying he would stay at the Lisbon club another year.

The former Manchester United player, who is in his second season with the Portuguese champions, said he had decided to exercise his option to extend his contract for a third year.

"I wish to end all current speculation ... and have therefore informed Sporting that I will be taking up my option year," the 37-year-old 'keeper said in a statement.

Schmeichel has not played since injuring a knee in training last October and undergoing surgery.

He said his recovery was going well and that he hoped to be back playing soon. "I am fit to train but not yet to play games," he said.

DAUM ADMITS TO TAKING COCAINE

Former Bayer Leverkusen coach Christoph Daum admitted that he had taken cocaine on occasion but that he had not taken drugs in the recent past.

"I admit here openly that I have had contact with drugs," Daum told a news conference after returning from an 82-day exile in the United States.

Daum went to America after being fired as Leverkusen's coach and being dropped as trainer-designate of the German national team.

"I occasionally took cocaine in private. This is all behind me now," Daum said.

He added it had been a "mistake" to submit voluntarily to a drugs test after allegations about his private life appeared in the German media.

Christoph Daum: Admits to drug taking.

WORTHINGTON CUP

Semi-Final First Leg

CRYSTAL PALACE 2
LIVERPOOL 1

First Division side Crystal Palace has taken a step towards their first appearance in a League Cup final their surprise 2-1 win over Premier League side Liverpool in their semi-final first leg match last week.

Latvian international Andrejs Rubins put Palace ahead at Selhurst Park after 56 minutes with a vicious left-footed drive.

Clinton Morrison made it 2-0 to Alan Smith's side 21 minutes later before Liverpool's Czech raider Vladimir Smicer, fed by new Finnish signing Jari Litmanen, pulled one back moments later.

Gerard Houllier's side, who have won the League Cup five times, were left to rue a host of glaring misses.

England internationals Emile Heskey and Michael Owen will not be glad to hear Tord Grip, the assistant to new national team coach Seven Goran Eriksson, was watching from the stands as they both missed sitters in an open first half.

The winners face either premier league Ipwich Town or first division Birmingham City in the final at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium on February 25.

Ipswich won the first leg of their semifinal 1-0 at Portman Road on Tuesday.

Liverpool remain 6-5 favourites to win the trophy with Palace a 5-1 chance. The other semi-finalists are Ipswich (13-8) and Birmingham (7-1).

Liverpool's Jamie Carragher (right) blocks a shot from Crystal Palace's Clinton Morrison during their Worthington Cup semi-final first leg match at Selhurst Park.

IPSWICH TOWN 1
BIRMINGHAM CITY 0

A controversial Marcus Stewart penalty gave Ipswich Town a 1-0 win over Birmingham City in the first leg of their English League Cup semi-final.

Stewart converted the spot kick in first half injury time after the referee ruled that former Ipswich player Danny Sonner had handled in the box.

Sonner insisted the offence was accidental and was booked for his protests.

Ipswich continued to make the running in the second half but the first division visitors were well-organised in defence and occasionally dangerous on the break.

Ipswich, currently flying high in the premier league had to settle for the single goal victory which leaves the tie delicately balanced ahead of the St Andrews return.

Birmingham, managed by former England striker Trevor Francis, have beaten Tottenham Hotspur and Newcastle United so far in the competition.

The final is at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium with a place in the UEFA Cup available for the winners.

Ipswich celebrate Marcus Stewart's penalty goal against Birmingham City at Portman Road.

FIFA World Rankings

(Valid until January 17)

FIFA founded 1904

1	Brazil	69	Burkina Faso	137	Swaziland
2	France	69	Congo DR	138	Bahrain
3	Argentina	71	Uzbekistan	138	Luxemburg
4=	Italy	72=	Albania	140	Tanzania
4=	Czech Republic	72=	**AUSTRALIA**	141	Fiji
6	Portugal	74=	Kuwait	142	Korea DPR
7	Spain	74=	China PR	143=	Grenada
8	Netherlands	76	FYR Macedonia	143=	Antigua and Barbuda
9=	Yugoslavia	77	Cuba	145=	Andorra
9=	Paraguay	78	Bosnia-Herz	145=	St Kitts & Nevis
11	Germany	79=	Iraq	147	Liechtenstein
12	Mexico	79=	Guinea	148	Benin
13	Romania	81	Togo	149	Sri Lanka
14	Norway	82	Algeria	150	Botswana
15	Colombia	83=	El Salvador	151	Bangladesh
16	United States	83=	Haiti	152	Dominica
17	England	85	Lithuania	153	Bermuda
18	Croatia	86	Congo	154	Maldives
19	Chile	87	Namibia	154	Gambia
20	South Africa	88	Senegal	156	Cape Verde Is
21	Russia	89	Gabon	157	Dominican Rep
22	Denmark	90=	Armenia	158	Eritrea
22	Sweden	90=	New Zealand	159	Cayman Islands
24	Slovakia	92	Latvia	160	Yemen
25	Scotland	93	Northern Ireland	161	Mauritania
26	Tunisia	94	Moldova	162	Chinese Taipei
27	Belgium	95=	Liberia	163	Chad
28	Morocco	95=	Belarus	164	Surinam
29	Trinidad & Tobago	97	Indonesia	165	Laos
30	Turkey	98	Mali	166	Nepal
31	Ireland Rep	99	Vietnam SR	167	Vanuatu
32	Uruguay	100	Syria	168	San Marino
33	Egypt	101	Singapore	169	Cambodia
34	Ukraine	102=	Qatar	170	Cook Islands
35	Slovenia	102=	Uganda	171	Palestine
36	Saudi Arabia	104	Barbados	172	British Virgin Is.
36	Iran	105	Jordan	173	Samoa
38	Japan	106	Oman	174	Kyrgyzstan
39	Cameroon	107=	Malaysia	175	Netherlands Ant
40	Korea Republic	107=	Kenya	176	Central African R.
41	Israel	109	Wales	177	Guinea-Bissau
42	Greece	110	Lebanon	178	Bahamas
43	Poland	111	Venezuela	179	Philippines
44	Austria	112	Mozambique	179	Macao
45	Peru	113	Malawi	181	Sao Tome e Principe
46	Honduras	114	Madagascar	182	Niger
47	Hungary	115	Azerbaijan	183	Guyana
48=	Jamaica	116	Libya	184	Aruba
48=	Zambia	117	Faroe Islands	185	Tonga
50	Iceland	118	Mauritius	186	Belize
51	Cote d' Ivoire	119	Malta	187	Equatorial Guinea
52	Nigeria	120	Kazakhstan	188	Seychelles
53=	Bulgaria	121	Panama	189	Djibouti
53=	Ecuador	122	India	190	Pakistan
55	Angola	123	Hong Kong	191	Nicaragua
56	Guatemala	124	Myanmar	192	Papua New Guinea
57=	Ghana	125	Turkmenistan	193	Brunei Dar
57=	Switzerland	126	Burundi	194	Somalia
59	Finland	127	St Vincent/Gr	195	Puerto Rico
60	Costa Rica	128	Rwanda	196=	Mongolia
61	Thailand	129	Sierra Leone	196=	Anguilla
62	Cyprus	130	Solomon Islands	198	US Virgin Islands
63	Canada	131	Tahiti	199	Guam
64	UAE	132	Sudan	200	Turks & Caicos Isl
65	Bolivia	133	Ethiopia	201	Bhutan
66	Georgia	134	Tajikistan	202	Montserrat
67	Estonia	135	St Lucia		
68	Zimbabwe	136	Lesotho		

***Note:** Teams inactive since 1991 and teams which have not played yet to do not appear in the table.*

MARADONA DENIES OWING 50 BILLION LIRE IN UNPAID TAX

Diego Maradona has been met on his arrival in Rome by financial police who told him he owed about 50 billion lire (16.4 million pounds) to Italian tax authorities, police sources have said.

Eyewitnesses said Maradona was escorted to police offices at Rome's main Fiumicino airport by some 20 financial policemen after he disembarked from a flight from Buenos Aires via Madrid late last week.

Maradona, who is in Italy to take part in television programmes and receive prizes for his career achievements, signed documents notifying him about the unpaid taxes and left the airport.

The scene took place before a large crowd of fans and television crews who were waiting in the airport.

Diego Maradona: Met on his arrival in Rome by financial police.

The former Argentina captain denied he owed Italy tax money.

"It is a big lie...I am calm and I want to reassure my mother, my daughters and the Argentine people," Italian news agency ANSA quoted him as saying.

"I don't have all that money in my pockets," he later joked.

Maradona played for Italian soccer club Napoli for six years from 1986, transforming the troubled Naples team into double league title winners.

During his visit, Maradona will meet Napoli officials to discuss his possible return as a member of the team's technical staff.

The soccer genius who led Argentina to their second World Cup triumph in 1986 was handed a 15-month suspension from football worldwide for doping in 1991.

SPANISH REFEREES TO CARRY SHIRT ADVERTISING

Spanish referees will be the first in Europe to wear advertising on their shirts, the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) announced last week.

After being given the go-ahead by FIFA, referees in the first and second division will carry the name of broadcasting platform Quiero on the front of their shirts during league and cup matches.

Last weekend's league matches were due to see the start of the experiment.

"We have asked FIFA if we can be the pioneers in this initiative and they have agreed that referees can carry advertising on their shirts until they make a definitive decision on the matter in March," federation president Angel Maria Villar told reporters.

The four-year contract with the company is worth a total of 800 million pesetas (AUS$8 million).

The RFEF said the money generated by the intiative will go to the referees and to the establishment of a new training school for the officials.

MILTON KEY NES? NO THANKS, SAY DONS FANS

Fans of English Division One club Wimbledon said last week they would voice their disagreement with plans to move the team's base out of London despite having agreed to a meeting with club chiefs.

Officials from the club, which currently rents Crystal Palace's Selhurst Park ground in south London, said they were considering a move to a new 45,000 seater stadium in Milton Keynes, some 80 kilometres north of the capital.

"Milton Keynes is not our home. It is not our traditional fan base," said Laurence Lownes from the Wimbledon Independent Supporters Association (WISA).

Hundreds of fans took part in a demonstration after the side's FA Cup game against second division Notts County and the WISA hoped to stage a repeat performance after last Saturday's league game against Preston.

Following the Notts County sit-in, Wimbledon's deputy chairman Charles Koppel wrote on the club's website that a meeting with supporters' groups was scheduled for the end of the month.

The club have been without a permanent home in southwest London since leaving Plough Lane in 1991.

CAPTAIN TO STAY AT WEST HAM

Club captain Steve Lomas is to remain with West Ham United after turning down offers to join Premier League rivals Manchester City and Everton.

"I have made up my mind to stay, but I thought it was common courtesy to speak to the clubs after a fee had been agreed," Lomas told West Ham's official website last week.

"They made me feel wanted and that was a factor but I have always stressed that I didn't want to leave West Ham."

The Northern Ireland international, who is 27 on Thursday, added: "I want to forget all about this now and get on with the job of helping West Ham into Europe, which has always been our aim even when we struggled at the start of the season.

"It would be remiss of me to say money wasn't a factor because it is a short career, but that is not the be all and end all."

Steve Lomas: Skipper to stay with the Hammers.

Lomas had been involved in 10 days of transfer talks with City and Everton.

The tough-tackling midfield player started his career with City and made 111 league appearances for them before joining West Ham in April 1997.

QANTAS
THE SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA

National Soccer League

	TOTAL							HOME						AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A
SOUTH MELBOURNE	14	9	4	1	29	8	31	7	6	1	0	19	4	7	3	3	1	10	4
PERTH GLORY	14	8	3	3	32	15	27	7	5	1	1	20	5	7	3	2	2	12	10
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	13	8	3	2	27	16	27	7	4	2	1	13	8	6	4	1	1	14	8
SYDNEY OLYMPIC	14	8	3	3	23	13	27	7	5	1	1	14	5	7	3	2	2	9	8
MARCONI STALLIONS	14	6	5	3	21	13	23	7	3	2	2	12	9	7	3	3	1	9	4
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE	14	7	2	5	24	25	23	8	5	1	2	18	13	6	2	1	3	6	12
PARRAMATTA POWER	14	7	1	7	22	19	22	8	4	0	4	15	13	6	3	1	2	7	6
NORTHERN SPIRIT	13	5	4	4	16	13	19	7	3	3	1	7	4	6	2	1	3	9	9
SYDNEY UNITED	14	5	4	5	19	23	19	7	3	3	1	10	10	7	2	1	4	9	13
CANBERRA COSMOS	14	5	3	6	24	23	18	6	2	1	3	10	9	8	3	2	3	14	14
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	14	5	3	6	22	24	18	7	3	2	2	12	10	7	2	1	4	10	14
FOOTBALL KINGZ	14	4	3	7	20	25	15	6	3	1	2	12	6	8	1	2	5	8	19
BRISBANE STRIKERS	14	4	4	6	24	29	13	6	3	2	1	15	8	8	1	2	5	9	19
NEWCASTLE UNITED	14	2	6	6	12	23	12	8	2	2	4	7	10	6	0	4	2	5	13
EASTERN PRIDE	14	2	4	8	18	24	10	7	1	4	2	8	9	7	1	0	6	10	15

Matches played against Carlton will result in all teams being awarded a 3-0 win and 3 competition points

PARRAMATTA POWER 2
(Miller 39 pen, 68)
PERTH GLORY 3
(Mori 34, Wehrman 63, Despotovski 89 pen)

Venue: Parramatta Stadium. **Crowd:** 5,071. **Referee:** M. Breeze
Cautions: Petkovic (PG) 39.
Teams: PARRAMATTA POWER: Crews, Elrich, Tobin, Miller, Griffiths (Thorp 75), Berry (Ardone 45), Brown, Blagojevic, Vrkic, Bennett, Lee.
PERTH GLORY: Petkovic, Trajkovski (Deans 77), Miller, Pryce, Harnwell, Valle, Wehrman, Faria, Mori, Despotovski (Carbone 89), Edwards (Maloney 75).

NEWCASTLE UNITED 0
SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1
(Juric 90)

Venue: Marathon Stadium. **Crowd:** 10,525. **Referee:** C. Diomis.
Cautions: Sprod (NU) 16, Wilson (SO) 54, Sarr (SO) 61, McManus (NU) 74, Wilson (NU) 79, Augerinos (SO) 85, Tsekenis (NU) 90.
Teams: NEWCASTLE UNITED: Catlin, Roberts, Zoricich, McManus, Sprod, Wilson, Magnacca, Buonavoglia, Tsekenis, Surian (Dodd 44), Masi (Harper 57).
SYDNEY OLYMPIC: Bolton, Juric, Baillie, Kohler, Wilson, Augerinos (Moore 88), Halpin, Collina, Carle (Marusic 71), Owens (Sarr 46), Cardozo.

LEADING GOALSCORERS
After Round Fourteen

D. MORI	(Perth Glory)	10
J. MILLER	(Parramatta Power)	9
A. THOMPSON	(Carlton/Marconi)	9
B. BURGESS	(Northern Spirit)	7
S. CHIPPERFIELD	(W'gong Wolves)	7
B. DESPOTOVSKI	(Perth Glory)	7
A. VLAHOS	(South Melbourne)	7

CANBERRA COSMOS 1
(Hagger 75)
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE 1
(Pelosi 59)

Venue: Bruce Stadium. **Crowd:** 1,804 **Referee:** P Green
Cautions: Nil
Teams: CANBERRA COSMOS: Konstantinou, Anthopoulos, Ravanello (Hokker 35), Purdue, Imaya, Milin, Castro, Angeluoci, Cortes (Hagger 73), Lyons (Arranz 84), Miyazawa.
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE: Cagalj, Lagali, Kowcevic, Bucciarelli, Veart, Vidmar, Hassell, Tunbridge (Terminello 61), Pantelis, (Salapasidis 61), Karlovic, Pelosi.

SYDNEY UNITED 1
(Deur 58)
EASTERN PRIDE 0

Venue: Sydney United Sports Centre **Crowd:** 2,312 **Referee:** J. Blaney
Cautions: Burt (SU) 19, D Kim (EP) 44, Talevski (SU) 81, Pondeljak (SU) 92.
Teams: SYDNEY UNITED: Tollos, Burt, Plesa, Arambasic, Arrarte (Duer 46), Pondeljak, Rastall, Genc, Menapi (Awaritefe74), Webb (Talevski 52), Palapanis
EASTERN PRIDE: Jevdjevic, Fak, Gotis, Ki Kim (Deak 74), Bell, Roach, Watkins, Puca (Wearne 92), Hutchinson, Atkinson, Stergiooulos.

PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Marconi striker ARCHIE THOMPSON: Bagged a brace upon his return to Melbourne last weekend.

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 1
(Porter 38)
MARCONI STALLIONS 4
(Thompson 51, 68, Care 72, Brownlie 81)

Venue: Knights Stadium. **Crowd:** 4,287. **Referee:** Eddie Lennie.
Cautions: Babic (MS) 28, A. Vargas 53 (MK), Longo 55 (MS).
Teams: MELBOURNE KNIGHTS: Acevski, Vasilevski, R. Vargas, Porter, Banini (Zelic 74), Kiratzoglou, A. Vargas, Horvat, Cervinski (Da Costa 66), Marth, Lapsansky.
MARCONI STALLIONS: Aceski, M.Babic, Constanzo, Longo, Kim, Afkos (Zoric 56), Care, Farah, Renaud, Trajanovski (Brownlie 74), Thompson (J.Maisano).

SOUTH MELBOURNE 3
(Trimboli 18, Kalogeracos 32, Coveny 74)
FOOTBALL KINGZ 0

Venue: Bob Jane Stadium **Crowd:** 5,782. **Referee:** S Micalef
Cautions: Nil
Teams: SOUTH MELBOURNE: Petkovic, Clarkson, Durakovic (Kisnorbo 81), Iosifidis, De Amicis, Coveny, Susa, Panopoulos (Colosimo 72), Vlahos, Trimboli (c), Kalogeracos (Anastasiadis 77).
FOOTBALL KINGZ: Eaddy, Bluhm, Cartwright (Bunce 72), Osman, Douglas (Perry 77), Campbell, Burton, Ngata (c), Lines, Rufer (Davis 62), Ibrahim.

WOLLONGONG WOLVES vs NORTHERN SPIRIT
(Postponed)

Because of Wollongong's involvement in the Oceania Club Championships in Papua New Guinea, the match between Wollongong and Northern Spirit was postponed and will be played later this year.

BRISBANE STRIKERS
BYE

ROUND 15

FRIDAY JANUARY 19

Northern Spirit	vs	South Melbourne
Newcastle Breakers	vs	Melbourne Knights
Football Kingz	vs	Sydney United

SATURDAY JANUARY 20

Perth Glory	vs	Canberra Cosmos
Eastern Pride	vs	Sydney Olympic
Marconi Stallions	vs	Brisbane Strikers

Adelaide vs Wollongong (Postponed)
Parramatta Power — Bye